



# Fate Prototype



蒼銀のフラグメンツ

桜井 光

原作 TYPE-MOON

イラスト 中原

1



# Fate Prototype

蒼 銀 の フ ラ グ メ ン ツ

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The illustration features three main characters. On the left, a young man with blonde hair and green eyes, wearing a dark blue and white uniform with a sword on his back, looks towards the viewer. In the center, a young girl with short blonde hair and blue eyes, wearing a light blue dress with a white ruffled collar and a white flower garland, sits on the lap of the man in the uniform. On the right, a young woman with long dark hair, wearing a pink coat, stands with her back to the viewer, looking away. The background is a bright blue sky with white clouds. The title 'Fate Prototype' is written in a stylized font at the top, with '蒼銀のフラグメンツ' below it. A diamond-shaped icon with the number '1' is in the center. The author's name '桜井 光' is at the bottom, with '原作 TYPE-MOON' and 'イラスト 中原' below it.

# Fate Prototype

蒼銀のフラグメンツ

1

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# Servant Saber

セイバー

A holy sword wielder who values virtue and believes in justice.

He, the legendary King of Knights, had once fought alongside the Knights of the Round Table for the future of his homeland, Britain.

Unlike the 'second time' in the year 1999, the wish he desired from the Grail in the Holy Grail War of year 1991 was the 'salvation of his homeland'. Although he feels uneasy about the principles of his Master Sajo Manaka, who seemed to innocently enjoy the battle to the death between the seven masters and their warriors—

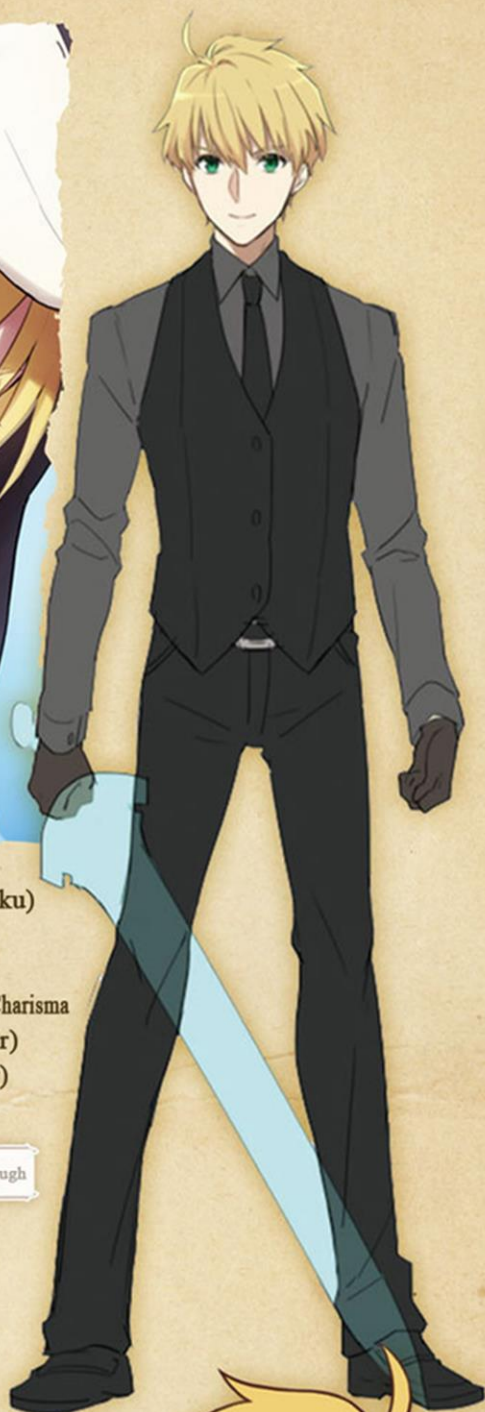
For the sake of his homeland and to fulfill his duty as a king, the blue and silver knight will tread the warpath however many times need be.







Hood Worn



Personal Data

First Person: Watashi (Under certain conditions, Boku)

Servant Rank: First

True Name: Arthur Pendragon

Skills: Magic Resistance, Riding, Instinct, Mana Burst, Charisma

Noble Phantasm: Barrier of the Wind King (Invisible Air)

Sword of Promised Victory (Excalibur)

Status



Early Design Rough



TYPE-MOON Ace  
Vol. 9 Special  
Comic Imageboard



Store Special  
Illustration



Master Sajo Manaka

A girl who dances in  
the Holy Grail War  
solely for the sake of  
love.

Omnipotence as a girl.

Overflowing with  
innate talent, she is able  
to freely use *all forms*  
of *magecraft*.

She joins the Holy  
Grail War of 1991 as a  
representative as a  
representative of the  
prestigious magus  
household Sajo.

沙条愛歌





Command Spells



However — to her, the battle to the death is nothing more than shining, colorful days of love meant to grant 'his', her beloved's, wish.

Regardless of who she faces, be it Master or Servant, she will confront them with a smile.

Personal Data

First Person : Watashi

Master Rank : First - Seraphim

Magecraft Systems : None

Magic Circuit/Quality : EX

Magic Circuit/Quantity : E

Magic Circuit/Structure : Abnormal (Not applicable to past)

Early Design Rough



Store Special Illustration



Manaka's younger sister.

She attends Suginami's elementary school, close to her home residence.

Due to her magus training from her father, her thoughts are a bit more mature compared to her classmates. However, she still exhibits behaviors that reflect her young age.

While she admires her 'genius' sister, whom she doesn't converse much with, she also bears an inferiority complex towards her.

She likes her fried eggs cooked on both sides.

# 沙条綾香



Personal Data

First Person : Watashi (In 1999, she occasionally uses Atashi)

Master Rank : —

Magecraft Systems : Witchcraft

Magic Circuit/Quality : C

Magic Circuit/Quantity : C

Magic Circuit/Structure : Normal



The head of the Sajo family in 1991.

He seeks the Holy Grail in order to achieve the greatest ambition of many magi of the millenium - to arrive at the 'Root'. Thus, he places his hopes on Manaka's natural talent. Although he was not chosen to be a master, he participates in the Holy Grail War as Manaka's collaborator.

He is Manaka and Ayaka's father whilst also serving as their teacher in witchcraft — though, there never was a moment where Manaka truly needed a teacher—

# 沙条広樹

Personal Data

First Person : Watashi

Master Rank : —

Magecraft Systems : Witchcraft & Others

Magic Circuit/Quality : —

Magic Circuit/Quantity : —

Magic Circuit/Structure : —



# Servant Assassin

# アサシン

Early Design Rough

The seventh ranked servant, Assassin.

An assassin who wears a skull mask. She once served under the founder of a group of religious assassins, 'The Old Man of the Mountain'. In life, she was known under the alias 'Hassan of Serenity', a master a poison killings.

Having lost her master when she was summoned as a servant in the year 1991, she began to wander the darkness of Tokyo's night, where she encountered Manaka. She was overwhelmed; fascinated by the girl who would neither die nor show anguish when she touched her, then—

Status



Personal Data

First Person: Watashi

Servant Rank: Seventh

True Name: Hassan of Serenity

Skills: Presence Concealment, Independent Action, Shapeshift, Throwing – Daggers, Poison Resistance

Noble Phantasm: Delusional Poison Body (Zabaniya)



# Servant Lancer

The fourth ranked servant, Lancer.

Female.

She was ordered by her master, through command seal, to skirmish with each servant a minimum of once, and to drink 'a certain elixir' when facing the one who proved to be the most formidable.

Crossing blades with Saber, whom she was certain was the strongest servant, she reluctantly drank the elixir—

ランサー



Personal Data

First Person : Watashi  
Servant Rank : Fourth  
True Name : ???  
Skills : ???  
Noble Phantasm : ???

Status



The third ranked Servant, Archer.

An outstanding archer. During his brief engagement with Saber at Mount Okutama, he was praised by Saber as 'Equal to Sir Tristan of the Knights of the Round Table'. He had performed a long distance attack that could called a special move in itself, but the move did not rely on his Noble Phantasm.

While he confronted Saber at Mount Okutama; at that time, his master was already—

アーチャー



Personal Data

First Person : Ore  
Servant Rank : Third  
True Name : ???  
Skills : ???  
Noble Phantasm : ???

Status



# Servant Archer



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The background of the page is a dark, textured surface with swirling, organic, and somewhat crystalline patterns in shades of black and dark grey. A thin, light-colored diagonal line runs from the upper right towards the lower left, intersecting the swirling patterns.

# Little Lady ACT-1



# Little Lady Arc

## Act 1

---

*The omnipotent girl has fallen in love*

*Thou art a radiant person —————  
Sincere, proud.  
And kind.*

*That smile of his sparkles softly, like the shining morning sun.  
You, who art kind, believe in justice, and loves goodness.  
Despite hating conflict, you're stronger than anyone if you pick up your sword for a moment.  
Your shining sword removes and eliminates those who'd become the evil, the wicked in every  
corner of the world.*

*—————You're a prince from a fairy tale.*

*In reality there are no princes.  
There is no meaning even in looking for them.  
Because reality, is much more, cruel and harsh.  
We were raised while being told as such.  
By our parents, by our teachers.  
Or perhaps by the world itself.*

*Look, at how cruel it is, at how harsh it is.  
Black is the colour which permeates this world.  
Its ashen colour persists to the utmost.*

*There are no princes, or white horses either.  
There are also no such things as dazzling fairy tales anywhere.*

*But, we knew it.  
My prince is surely, somewhere in this world.  
That's right, we knew it.*

*If there is something like a fairy tale like event, it is certainly somewhere in this world.  
Yeah.*

*So—————  
We know.*

*The brilliant you are there in this world.  
You who art my destiny is there in this world.*



*We were separated by time, sometimes brushing each other in time.*

*But someday, we'll snuggle up closely together.*

*While tearing apart the darkness of the world.*

*Clad in blue and silver.*

*With your shining sword that is more radiant than anything, in hand.*

*—————You will come to me, here.*



*There raise not the dead.  
There cannot recover lost things, never again.  
Even the greatest miracle can only affect the living.  
In the final days, salvation can be found once more.  
The Holy City of Jerusalem shall reappear.  
The kingdom accepts all.*

*From yonder distant waves, seven heads, and ten crowns shall appear.*

*O' you who art sinful.  
Thy name is the enemy.  
Thy heart is of greed.*

*Thy praises shall morph into blasphemy and rage over the earth.*

*In the foundation of a universal miracle.  
There is no proof of our lost lord's love, for it is a paradox here.*



*The Holy Grail War.*

*It is, a bloody conflict, where we magi will wager our lives for the sake of a wish.  
Seven Servants, and Seven Magi who have obtained the rank of an angel.  
Heroic Spirits who once met an 'untimely death' will revive into the modern world by temporarily  
obtaining vessels for their souls called Servants, gathering together in one place alongside the magi  
who are to be their Masters, they will kill each other until one Servant remains at the end, unfolding  
into a brutal battle that surpasses human intellect.*

*Magi, Servants.  
For the sake of having their wishes granted, together.  
When it is the year 1999 AD.  
The end of the old millennium.*

*A new Holy Grail War will start, here in Tokyo—————a Promised Land at the far end of the  
East.*

*And, now.  
A single, Servant stands before my eyes.*

*He, who has green eyes.  
He, who wears silver armour.  
The first ranked Servant, who swore to fight together with me in this Holy Grail War, nestles close  
to me, a Master of the lowest of the seven ranks, Princes.  
You, a knight who said that you'll protect me.*



*Saber.*

*To the me of that time, you, seemed to be too tall.*

*Without realising it, I'm looking at your figure as if it was 8 years ago.*

*8 years ago.*

*At that time, you were probably, fighting in a place unknown to me, assuredly, by my older sister's side.*

*And yet.*

*There were a lot of things that I didn't know about.*

*About you.*

*About my Papa.*

*About what this thing called the Holy Grail War, specifically meant to you?*

*Or what my older sister had done back then?*

*My older sister—————*

*Big Sis Manaka.*

*A person who shone more than anyone else.*

*A person who'd participated in the Holy Grail Wars 8 years ago, together with you.*

*Although there are a lot of things that I don't remember even now, as I at that time was still young, even so, there are also things that I surely do remember.*

*That's right, for example.*

*I, have always, about my big sister—————*



The light of the dazzling sun, was flowing in from a gap in the closed curtains. The voices of the songbirds, were telling the time as they perched on the branches of every tree immediately beyond the window. Signs of the morning. Disappearing somewhere like a lie the coldness and darkness of the night, the day which should've been "tomorrow" just before she had slept, had come in the form of "today."

**Ayaka:** "Uu—"

Still rubbing her somewhat heavy eyelids, Ayaka Sajyou faintly woke up, in her soft bed. The light of the sun. The voices of the songbirds. Although, she didn't hate the signs of the mornings which ought to be comfortable, and invigorating. She couldn't become fond of the arrival of morning itself, too much.

**Ayaka:** (It's already morning)



Shifting her own body temperature, she didn't deny that she liked the comfortable sensation of her bed which kept its warmth to just the right temperature. Speaking of preferences in a category of fondness, though she'd preferred to keep sleeping, scattering her body about while still feeling its warmth like this.

**Ayaka:** (The alarm clock, hasn't rung, yet.....)

Holding some expectations, she reached out for the digital clock placed at her bedside, while covering her head with her blanket. The cold air was touching her right hand, as it came out. If she had say which one of these sensations she'd prefer, then she liked this one more. However, cold things are still cold. So she immediately drew the clock back into her blanket.

It was a reasonably high quality clock, which displayed the days, dates and the AD. It was an item which had been bought and given to her for her birthday last year. Although she had wanted a much more cuter one, she had already been using this clock for more than a year, and couldn't be bothered to complain about it to her Papa.

【1991】

She could always confirm the time, by unconsciously giving a fleeting glance to the AD display.

【6:14 AM】

6:14 AM.

If she was a girl her age, then surely, at this time most people would certainly go back to sleep again. However, because Ayaka's lifestyle was somewhat different from your typical elementary school girl's, she decided to turn off the alarm clock while grumbling ".....perfect," making a slightly troubled face as her eyes laid onto the digital display. The set time on the alarm clock was 6:15 AM. Thus, perfect. She couldn't stay in bed any more than this. Squirming, she crawled her way out of the blanket.

Squirming, she took off her pajamas. As expected, the morning air was still cold. Cold. Picking up the change of clothes that had been folded up properly and placed on top of her desk chair, before she had gone to sleep last night, she changed a bit more quickly than the time that it'd took for her to remove them. Since when, had she become able to change her clothes by herself. She had been able to do it since she moved up to elementary school at least. If she said it conversely, then she didn't remember when she was made to change her clothes by someone. Whether she had been made to by her Mum or her Papa, she couldn't say.

Though she thought that it probably wasn't her Papa. She only believed that it was sort of strange, despite not remembering it.

**Ayaka:** "Okay!"

Having finished changing her clothes, she stood in front of the full length mirror there beside the wardrobe. She had properly changed her clothes. Alright. This bright red coat was Ayaka's favourite. She thought that the red buttons were cute and a bit fashionable. While checking the clock hanging on the wall, she combed her hair quickly with a comb. Immediately finishing it,

because her hair wasn't that long. It's okay. She'll make it in **time**. Her feelings were racing, though, because it'd be down to the wire.

**Ayaka:** (.....I've got to get up much earlier, if I want to do the cooking)

Although, she was capable of changing her clothes by herself. She couldn't cook, yet. It was a job left up to her Papa. Her Papa did most of the chores, basically, by himself. Granted there were days where a helper would come in occasionally to help, but at the end of the day, her Papa was the one who managed the huge Sajyou family estate, which had a reasonable number of **rooms that couldn't be entered**. If it was on her Papa's instructions, though then Ayaka could also help with the housework.

**Ayaka:** "Papa, should already be up by now."

Her Papa who must've stayed up late again, last night. Although, he was surely the one preparing breakfast again this morning, Ayaka basically couldn't help him with it. At the very least, she could help with setting the table. But, Ayaka had other stuff to do in the morning hours. An established daily routine. In other words————her black magic training. Studying, and practice.

The air in the hallway, was much colder than the inside of her room. The breath which she exhaled was also white. While warming both hands with her breath, she started heading towards the bathroom. Placing the footstool that her Papa had made for her own use, she stood on top of it, washing her face with enough cold water that she couldn't be bothered somewhat by the air. The fluffy characterised morning sensation was instantly fading away. Clearing her mind up, as the traces of sleep also went somewhere else.

Nodding, a "yeah", she wiped her damp face with her own usable towel. Looking into the mirror, she was now thinking that she should've held her bangs back with a pin, having considerably soaked her bangs. To the version of herself beyond the mirror, she was making an apparently troubled face.

**Ayaka:** "Please don't make strange faces, Ayaka."

Nodding, yet another "yeah." She returned to the hallway. Just then, she finally noticed one thing.

**Ayaka:** "Huh?"

Is there some kind of a nice smell? Is it the breakfast from somewhere in the house, or in this neighbourhood? Although it wouldn't be strange if it was the smell of bacon and eggs as it was a typical item on the Sajyou family's daily morning menu, although she felt like the smell wafting in the air was similar to the smell of bacon, it was sort of more similar to the smell of another dish. But there's no way she'd know it, because she hadn't studied it, and she wasn't allowed to cook. While thinking in a corner of her mind, "What is it?", she proceeded straight through the corridor. Walking towards the other end of the hallway, she turned. Ayaka was turning towards **Garden**. Having exited the washroom, she opened a door that was past where she had walked much earlier through the hallway, and went outside. Opening the glass door at the other end, she proceeded



further into the passageway.

Finally, arriving. Even if she were to say to a classmate that her house was big, was it because she had lived in this house for too long, but although there were many times where she hadn't come with such liveliness, she felt it was so whenever she came to Garden like this. Or, did she mean that it's big, or spacious? But, she didn't hate it. Even if she felt that it was a long, distance to walk. Even if she felt the weight of her motivation towards her daily routine. She didn't hate them in itself, because she could come here.

———It wasn't a garden, or even a park.

———Garden.

Lush green trees. Flowers. Dozens of a variety of plants. Additionally, there were also several pigeons. Gathering at her feet, several of them flew straight at her, recognising Ayaka's appearance. Since she felt that calling it a garden was too grandiose, and felt that many of the plants could be called house plants, Ayaka thought that calling it Garden suited it, after all. Although she had always asked, "Why is it called Garden?" since way back when, but her Papa hadn't particularly given her an answer. He just vaguely nodded with approval. So, Ayaka decided to wilfully think like this. If, it wasn't her Papa who named this place "Garden." Then, surely, her Mum had named it. If she could accurately classify it, then it was definitely, a Greenhouse.

Even now, the glass ceilings and walls was taking in a lot of the morning sunlight. Whether it was because it was a precious countermeasure against acid rain, or her Papa was incredible, although her school teacher had said so when she came over for a home visit, she didn't know whether it was really a reason like that. In the first place, whether it was really her Papa who somehow created Garden.

**Ayaka:** "Good Morning."

Not, morning, but good morning. Making sure not to notice the pigeons that were cuddling up to her, she greeted her **private** place which had been built out of wood, and didn't have walls made out of glass. Nearby was a mountain of books and medicine bottles that were better off not bathing in sunlight. It was a place that was like her dad's study, a place that was sort of a morning **study spot** for Ayaka.

Although———

**Ayaka:** "Huh?"

She tilted her head. Her Papa should be here, at this time, like always. From 6:30 am to 7:30 am, for one hour before breakfast, she'd study black magic from her Papa. It was Ayaka's daily routine. And yet, no one was there.

**Ayaka:** "Papa."

He might've been somewhere in the Garden, only there was no one there. Gently, she tried to call out to him. She tried to wait for one second, two seconds. Even so, there was no reply. Only some pigeons warbling at her feet instead.

**Ayaka:** “Not you guys.....”

Trying to think about it. Was today a day, where her Papa couldn't see to her black magic studies? Although it didn't change what she had to do, she had to do it even so. Her training which was her daily routine, basically didn't exist on mornings where it is was okay to do nothing, and they had even been on her Papa's orders at the same time. At least there's no reason for her to get upset with him for having forgotten to tell her beforehand. Therefore, he might've said something about it this morning, or last night perhaps.

Now that she mentioned it————

**Ayaka:** “Something.....”

————*From here on out.*

**Ayaka:** “.....is, beginning.”

————*It's beginning.*

**Ayaka:** “And because of that.....”

*We have to participate in it.*

**Ayaka:** “Ummm.....”

————*It's the Saijou family's dearest wish.*

————*No, it's necessary in order to achieve the great ambition for us, Magi..*

**???:** “I've said it before; don't call out to the pigeons. Ayaka.”

A voice that she had gotten used to hearing. Immediately, she turned around in the direction of the voice. Immediately close to the glass doors at Garden's entryway, was the tall figure, of her Papa. Due to the sparkling sunlight, and having shadows cast over her face, looking up Ayaka couldn't tell his expression.

**Ayaka:** “Papa.”

**Hiroki:** “Don't call out to the sacrifices. Don't speak to them. We must never sympathise with the sacrifices. Sympathy makes black mages waver and leads them into doubt and hesitation. I shouldn't have to countlessly instruct you on this.”

**Ayaka:** “.....Yes.”

Ayaka nodded while bowing her head. As one would expect, she remembered him telling her this on several occasions. Even though she was trying to not be aware of them, she had called out to the pigeons at her feet, just then. The pigeons who were even now becoming emotionally attached to her like this. It had only been several of them when she had entered the Garden, but, already close



to 10 of them were gathering.

**Hiroki:** “Humans and pigeons cannot exchange words, so don’t mix with them. Originally they weren’t creatures who could gain sympathy, but I’m sure you who are young can probably feel it for them even now.”

**Ayaka:** “.....”

**Hiroki:** “This is for your own sake. Ayaka”

He had told her this on numerous occasions. He told her, and yet, he would tell her every morning. Ayaka herself, was thinking that she wanted to live up to her dad’s expectations. However, they kept getting attached to her like this, no matter what she did————Additionally, since she could **only obey** the instructions that her Papa gave her, it was a fact that she was also feeling opposed to this.

**Hiroki:** “You cannot separate Sacrifice and Black Magic. The pain of the sacrifices is a source of the power for the Black Arts.”

She had also heard this several times now. She had heard it every morning. Nonetheless forgetful Ayaka, still wouldn’t forget it.

**Ayaka:** “I’ll do, my best.”

Mumbling a little.

Although it was unreasonable, for her to raise her downward head. At the edge of her still downed gaze, were the figures of the white pigeons who were pecking at the tips of her sandals.

**Hiroki:** “Well. I don’t mind this morning. You can go to the dining room now.”

**Ayaka:** “Eh?”

————Eh?

She didn’t know what to say. In spite of never being allowed to leave Garden until meal time, every morning. Ayaka finally raised her face. Her Papa wasn’t facing her. His gaze was more towards her Mum’s room. Where was he looking, in that moment, she didn’t know. If he was looking in that direction, then perhaps, the dining room————

**Hiroki:** “It’s breakfast. You can keep Manaka company, this morning.”

Together they returned to the hallway, from which she came from by herself. Ayaka couldn’t ask, “Why?” Since her Papa’s orders were absolute, she just nodded and said “Okay.” She wasn’t concerned with him scolding her that her response should be “Yes.” The question of, “why,” which she just couldn’t ask, spread throughout Ayaka’s head becoming a huge whirlpool which went around and around.

**Ayaka:** “.....”

Staring, she was looking up fixatedly at her Papa’s back, who was walking a bit ahead of her. Will

she be able to say “What do you mean?” Is she still unable to say it? Her impression of her Papa, was one of a person, who didn’t talk very much except when it concerned magic. For example, he wouldn’t answer even if she was asking about her Mum. Or, even about the origins of Garden as well. At such times, he could just vaguely nod, as expected.  
And yet————

**Hiroki:** “It’s Manaka…….”

Her Papa strangely opened his mouth. Without looking over at her.

**Hiroki:** “About breakfast. Sorry, but can you please keep her company?”

**Ayaka:** “Big Sister?”

**Hiroki:** “She’ll probably prefer you, over me.”

**Ayaka:** “Huh?”

Not really understanding the implication, of what her Papa was saying. Ayaka tilted her head. Breakfast time was always with her Papa and older sister, and Ayaka’s family spent it with the 3 of them together, so, it wasn’t strange for him to say that her big sister was in the dining room. However, thinking that time was passing by too quickly. Perhaps, it’s still immediately past 6:30 am.

**Ayaka:** “Is Big Sis, hungry?”

As she said it, Ayaka thought that something was off.

Her big sister————

Her older sister who was 6 years older than Ayaka, Manaka Sajyou. Her big sister’s existence, was special to Ayaka. She couldn’t think to say to her big sister something like “You’re an ordinary child,” or “I want breakfast to hurry up.” She won’t say it. She even held a belief in her heart, that she would never say it. That’s why, she didn’t understand the implication of her Papa’s words.

**Hiroki:** “It seems she wants you to cook.”

**Ayaka:** “Cook?”

On countless occasions, she had seen her big sister cooking. However, it can’t be said, that she only proceeded to do so by herself, whenever her Papa just couldn’t take the time to do it, being too busy. Although, her Papa’s way of speaking now, appeared to be saying, that her big sister had desired this for herself, and that she had told him that she willingly wanted to do this.

**Ayaka:** “Big Sister said that?”

**Hiroki:** “That’s right.”

**Ayaka:** “I see.”

Ayaka nodded, meekly. Although she thought it was strange and wondering why that was, surely, it was because her big sister had said so. So naturally she thought, now I can show her that can cook perfectly.  
After all————





After all, Big Sis is such an amazing person.  
She's pretty and smart, and oh yeah cute, a person who can do anything.

**Manaka:** "Ayaka, will you take the plates? And the toast too?"

**Ayaka:** "Yes. Big sister."

**Manaka:** "Ah, not that one. Since it's for the sunny side up fried eggs and bacon, I prefer the smaller ones. See, you must separate them beforehand. All that's left is, ah, cut the toast thinly not thickly."

**Ayaka:** "Ah, o, okay————"

See, even now she's like this. Prompt, even in the kitchen. But, she's very graceful. Although there were countless times where my big sister had stood in the kitchen instead of dad, it's feels different now, I feel like she's preparing it because she needs to.

Efficiently, skilfully.

In this way, like now————it didn't feel like she's prompt like a cook, and it didn't even feel like she was becoming as beautiful as "Mum" was, which had come out in conversation. It's completely different from that time before. Although that time was also amazing, what is it I wonder? Even words that had the same 'amazing', what did I mean by that..... Her disposition? I think that those kind of things are different.

See, there are a number of items on the menu. I could tell that its different just by looking at it. That time before, we had milk, salad, and bacon and eggs on toast. But now, there was bacon and eggs on toast, salad, milk, kidney pie, cut codfish and fried potatoes, cheese and ham, porridge and scones, black tea, and then, there were plums and sliced peaches for dessert. There's so much of it, that even I couldn't eat it all!

Quickly doing this and that, Big Sis was making it all so accurately. Even her white fingertips which were holding a kitchen knife, seemed to be making me sigh just by looking at her. Even though, we only have, a 6-year difference between us. Why was she so, this person why was she so beautiful? Although I'm also a cute girl in elementary school, we're too different, Big Sis is————

**Manaka:** "Thank you, Ayaka. Fufu, why's your mouth so wide open?"

**Ayaka:** "Uhhh....."

For some reason I can't say, that it's because Big Sis is so pretty.

**Manaka:** "I see?"

My pretty, big sister Manaka. The kitchen is like a part of a wide palace ballroom, and Big Sis is like a princess dancing around and around in there. Cooking lots, and lots of food, she seems happy

somehow. She seems to be enjoying herself. Although I don't remember my mum's face, surely, I think that's what my mum may've been like when she was alive. In the light of the sun flowing through the window, she's sparkling.

Big Sis, is truly pretty. Although it's been like this up till now, what happened to her? This morning in particular. She's pretty, and radiant.

**Manaka:** "It's written in a book that British people, like codfish."

However, British people aren't confined to it either—————As she said that, Big Sis, smiled softly while basked in the morning sun. Like I thought, she's pretty. Her smiling face is cuter than a princess doll or one from any kind of picture book, and she's pretty above all else. Looking at Big Sis's apparently happy face like this, I wonder when did it happen?

A person who can do anything. My Big Sister. She's truly, different from me who can't even do studying, black magic, anything I make, arithmetic drills, black magic training, or this and that all that well. She can do anything. Or it seems, to be anything. Even pigeons. Even cats. She wouldn't stand petrified at them, like me. Big Sis who can do anything, perhaps by saying "I'm happy since you made it for me" or "Try and have fun," she thinks that I'm worthless. But it's like she's different. See, Big Sis, seems to be having so much fun. She's smiling.

Pretty—————

**Manaka:** "Here. Have a taste, Ayaka?"

**Ayaka:** "O, okay. Is it okay with you?"

**Manaka:** "It's fine. Look, go ahh."

Opening my lips as she's still saying it, I bit into, the piece of fried fish that she was holding out to me in her slender white fingers, ah ump.

I don't like fatty foods too much, but still.....

**Manaka:** "How is it?"

**Ayaka:** "Delicious....."

It's truly, delicious.

Fatty foods, although I don't really like them. It was crunchy, and fluffy, and it didn't feel greasy at all. It's so good!

**Manaka:** "Okay, it's looks like the good luck charm in the sour cream was effective. Okay, if Ayaka is okay with it♪"

**Ayaka:** "Good luck charm?"

**Manaka:** "To make my cooking delicious, a secret good luck charm. It's more amazing than magic."

At the table, Daddy who was drinking coffee started to choke, and cough as he'd heard it. Before Big Sis and I could start yelling, Daddy muttered "it's nothing." Maybe, I think Daddy was shocked. By Big Sis's words. Magic? A good luck charm? Even I can remember that. After all, the thing that people call magic, is real.





Our————

**Ayaka:** “Umm, The thing more amazing than magic, umm…….”

**Manaka:** “Whaat?”

**Ayaka:** “Daddy, said it. He said there was only one thing, more amazing than magic.”

**Manaka:** “That’s right. That’s why, I used it.”

Big Sis. Despite sounding so natural, I wonder what you’re talking about. It was a face like that. Dazzling, while basking in the morning radiance. A voice that could be heard from lips that were the same colour as the cherry blossom petals.

It’s as if, it’s truly, like————

**Manaka:** “The magic of love, see!”

Real **magic**. I, despite not knowing what kind of thing it is, think that it’s true.

**Ayaka:** “Love?”

**Manaka:** “Fufu. Ayaka, I wonder if you don’t know about it yet. It’s called the magic of love, of course.”

As she said it————Big Sis looked and whispered something to me.

It’s as if, she was addressing someone behind me.

**Manaka:** “It’s more amazing, than any kind of mystery that a Magus uses.”





The background of the page is a dark, textured surface with swirling, organic, and somewhat crystalline patterns in shades of black and dark grey. A prominent, thin, light-colored diagonal line runs from the upper right towards the lower left, intersecting the swirling patterns.

# Little Lady ACT-2

## Act 2

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*The person reflected in the girl's eyes is*

**Manaka:** “Here you go, Bon Appetite.”

The girl said, with her back to the radiance that was morning incarnate. Standing by the east window, while showing off a table which had various dishes arranged on it, in a voice that was more lovelier than the songbird who was even now chirping outside the residence. Which was in some respects, even accompanied by her shy gestures.

Was a pretty girl.

With soft hair that was visibly transparent. And pale, translucent coloured eyes. She looked really pretty in her green dress. A single, radiant flower in full bloom————That's right, he was describing the girl's figure in his mind. For example, if he was an elegant knight who was accustomed to handling ladies, then he would improvise, by extolling the girl's beauty while he was still on the verge of giving praise, during the one time where he could offer his gratitude for the many dishes that were served to him. However, if anything, he wasn't experienced with the ladies.

Thus, he was just, gazing at the girl.

**Saber:** “Thank you.”

He briefly told her. Loading his feelings of gratitude in it.

**Manaka:** “Umm, well....”

Despite showing some shy behavior, the girl was wearing a smile.

**Manaka:** “Since I don't know your tastes, I, ended up trying to make whatever came to my mind. Although I might've made a bit too much of it.”

**Saber:** “No. I appreciate your gratitude.”

**Manaka:** “You don't have to push yourself, just eat what you'd like.....”

A voice which was shyly telling. That is, it was suddenly, becoming smaller.

It was about the moment when the girl's incomprehensible gaze, quickly shifted from his figure to the table.

**Manaka:** “If you eat it for me.....”

A cheerfulness that was said to make all good fairies who were dancing and basking in the sun perspire. A large brilliantly blooming flower, which was wet with the morning dew. Each of their radiances, were darkening. The fairies hide, and the blooming flower closes over rewinding back in time.

Her eyes were shaking. The girl's expression sank.

**Saber:** "Well then....."

With all due respect—————

In front of the mountain of dishes which had been arranged on the table, he could now, see himself finally coming back to his senses. Certainly, there was probably too much of it for say a normal person's meal's worth. Egg dishes. Bacon and Eggs, Scrambled Eggs, Poached Eggs. Each of them, were roughly enough for six people!? Incidentally, the poached eggs were accompanied by toast. This was also for six people. Salad. Good-looking with green as its basic theme, it was also enough for six people.

Meat dishes. As for the sausages which were grilled together with the thick white mushrooms, this was also for six people. Furthermore, there was one whole Kidney Pie, which had been made using mushrooms with meat and cow intestines as its ingredients. Perhaps, it had just been baked. She had just said to him, that after she'd cut it into 6 equal pieces, she'd give him the very first piece."

The milk porridge was also for six people. An item which had cod fillet and potatoes deep fried in oil in it, was also in the pile. Dessert which was plums served with sliced peaches, were also fitting in its own way. As for the cream and scones which had been laid out for after the meal, a considerable amount of it was placed on a cake stand. On the whole, they were dishes that were unfamiliar to him. Separately, they were just items which had names which had been taught to him by the girl and images attached to them.

**Saber:** "It's not a problem if it's this amount."

**Manaka:** "But————"

**Saber:** "A meal serves as a knight's vitality for when he's appears on the battlefield. Though there is a lot of them, it is not something that will trouble me."

Saying that, he smiled. Although it was a facial expression that he had made in order to relieve the girl, in reality, if it was this amount then it was not an impossible argument. There was a certain truth in the matter that he had expressed in words.

Now that they were facing the battlefield, a knight needed a lot of vitality. Meat, potatoes, and alcohol, it's not like, there was an inherent belief that those knights who established their courage had to consume just that. Of course, there are limits to every exception. All of the knights who gathered at the Round Table which arose in his mind wouldn't confine themselves to nodding at these words. In any case.

At least, he could say this without being at a loss with himself.

**Saber:** "It's not a lie."

He was betting his sword and pride on it. He will never, let himself tell a lie.

**Saber:** "A person with your given conduct will obtain it all. Manaka"





Manaka Sajyou—————

That was the girl's name.

After a little while, breakfast began. He carried the food to his mouth as words, and when almost half of the food had disappeared, the girl finally regained her original cheerfulness. Every time he told her words "It's good.," the girl would become cheerful right before his eyes. The presence of fairies and flowers returns. And naturally, a smile appeared on their mouths.

On the girl, as well as himself.

**Manaka:** "And then."

The girl told him, with a huge smile on her face. If flowers could speak our language, then it'd probably be a sound like this. It was a sound worthy enough for him to think so. If only, his daughters who were living in that distant Avalon <sup>1</sup>, could sing like this.

**Manaka:** "See the sour creamed deep fried fish, I have confidence in that. After all, very picky Ayaka told me, that this fried food, was delicious. So this must be the one, right?"

**Saber:** "Yes, it has a particularly magnificent flavour."

**Manaka:** "Fufu, if you like it that much then I'm happy."

The girl closes her eyes seemingly completely happy.

**Manaka:** "You see this morning, nowadays, um well, to be precise I tried making an English styled breakfast from the 19th to 20th century. So, I guess what I'm wondering is if the flavour is close to your homeland's."

**Saber:** "Yes, it's delicious."

**Manaka:** "Really?"

**Saber:** "Yeah"

**Manaka:** "Really, truly?"

**Saber:** "Yes, My Lady<sup>2</sup>. Your cooking is extremely delicious."

Repeating his words. The girl, then deepened her smile even more.

**Manaka:** "I'm so glad ———"

Tilting her head, her hair was swaying. He too, was smiling a bit in response. Depressingly speaking though—————regarding the word, "England," he didn't feel like it was something that he could get used to. However, the girl's feelings were being conveyed to him.

That was enough. As a matter of fact, it was a delicious meal.

The dishes known to him were of reasonable labour; so they probably varied in their steps. Perhaps, they had a cultural decline over the long months and years, and may've also combined them with ones from foreign countries. He could feel this type of time difference, in the food that he carried to

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<sup>1</sup> Avalon: Home of the Fairies

<sup>2</sup> Yes, My Lady: Yes, my master.

his mouth. It was like he was yearning for something in there, but even so, he was grateful for the consideration.

The girl didn't know, what he desired, what he was feeling, what he thought about all of this, or the truth. But, he was accepting of the pure being. Without expressing, even the slightest bit of nervousness about facing the battles, he just, returned a smile towards the girl, who was talking while wearing an innocent expression that suited a girl her age.

And then———

**Manaka:** “Hey, Saber...”

**Saber:** “Yes, what is it?”

Renewed, she called out his name. So Saber, looked at the girl.

**Manaka:** “I, this morning, there was one thing that I understood. Um well, yeah, I definitely, must've known it from the start, but...”

The girl nodded “a yeah.”

**Manaka:** “You know in essence it's the same as cooking.”

Before he could ask “What is?” the words were reverberating. From her cherry blossom lips. Quietly, without changing her entire tone. In an extremely natural way. For example, in the same way as a cup whose contents were spilling out as it was being turned over.

**Manaka:** “———The way we do things in the Holy Grail War.”





The Holy Grail War is, in a way a conflict.

Even for people like me, this kind of conflict would never be a subject for discussion.

Originally, the right path for a Magus is to offer their own life to being a constant student who can surpass their generation.

Even if a conflict occurs between society and an individual who is in the process of protecting their family lineage and their research, it is normally impossible, to stop it from becoming a subject of conflict itself.

However, there is an exception.

The Holy Grail War.

Actually it's for a simple clear reason.

The number of wishes which the Holy Grail is able to grant is just one.

Against, seven "Masters" ----Magi who are participating in the Holy Grail War.

Six of them must be eliminated.

So prepare yourself, for this is the unavoidable basis of the conflict.

(An extract from an old notebook)



**Manaka:** "I understood that cooking, as well as the Holy Grail War, is the same as anything else."

The girl's words continue. Cheerfully -----While still maintaining the beauty of a large blooming flower, without 1% of overcast.

**Manaka:** "If it takes time, then it's better to use your head so that it doesn't take time. Although it takes time for stewed dishes to stew 'blub, blub' for a long time, wouldn't it simply be over and done with if you used a pressure cooker? Or even an electric mixer, or even a microwave oven. I'm not an idiot."

"Ping," she raised her index finger. Her gesture, was quite like, a young child when they had realized something. No. It was probably so. Even to the young girl before his eyes, truly, she had just probably came up with a good thing. During that moment he could grasp it.

The girl's innocence. The girl's purity.

This morning's cooking, and the Holy Grail War, to her they were roughly the same. Was it, the all-around feeling of her youthfulness which comes from her inadequate experience, or a manifestation of her innocence which wasn't able to grasp the rigorous conflict called the Holy Grail War? Or, did her **overwhelming natural gift** made him say such a thing? It's probably, the latter. After all she had been chosen as a Master at such a young age.

**Manaka:** "Besides, either way it's the preparations, right? I think what's also important, is that we make those preparations in advance for the sake of our goal."

She continued her speech. While receiving his gaze.

**Manaka:** "Since we don't know how powerful the other Servants are, I guess, it'll be more efficient to target the Masters first. Speaking further, rather than targeting the Masters themselves, if that person has a **weak point** who is inferior in power, then it's much more efficient to target it."

Continuing her speech. A weak point————if it's a typical Magus, then it's their family lineage itself. Their family. Their children.

**Manaka:** "So, should we abduct their children? Or, kill them?"

Until the girl had told him this, he had kept his silence. Now, he had no choice but to open his lips. However, it wasn't to offer his tactical / strategic opinions to the Magi who was his Master. It's just————

**Saber:** "Manaka."

He couldn't bear it any longer. For the girl, to acclimate to that without any pretension whatsoever.

*For the Holy Grail War..... For the sake of killing each other.....*

In order to completely kill all six Servants and Masters, he had already thought that they weren't planning on choosing the means. That is, a matter of course for Magi who are trying to survive the Holy Grail War. Regardless of how it is glossed over, for the ones carrying it out it is nothing but a conflict where they wager their lives. For the sake of their wishes, the Magi as well as the Heroic Spirits, will probably devote their all in seeking victory.

But, even so —————

**Saber:** "Courage is needed, to challenge someone to a fight."

Rising from his chair, standing by a window that was slightly separated from the table, he spun his words. It was not, his intention to preach about chivalry. It is, probably, not something that the girl of the distant Age of Reason could grasp herself.

**Saber:** "Perhaps, you've gotten it already."

He also couldn't make any forced words. Why, because his master, was none other than this girl.

**Saber:** “But, I cannot allow someone unrelated to it to get wrapped up in this. These are young people, all the more so if they are people who lack power.”

He said quietly to the innocence beneath his eyes. No doubt, it was as if he was giving detailed instructions to the young child. So that at least, this lovely girl, wouldn't have to choose the path of a blood smeared killer. However————

**Manaka:** “But it's for you sake, Saber”

Her smile, was unwavering. Even now it was thwarting his intentions to deliver his remonstrating words to her, for in there was an unchanging smile, that was not so greatly different than flowers which were wet with the morning dew, swaying in the gentle cool breeze. Her shining eyes, were staring straight back at him.

**Saber:** “My.....”

**Manaka:** “That's right, you mustn't get hurt. In a clash with your fellow Servants, you who are of the first rank, I believe won't lose, but even so, if you get hurt whilst fighting, then I.....’

While saying it, the girl put a hand to her chest. The chest of her green dress. Her delicate fingertips, were gently, unfastening her buttons————

**Manaka:** “I just couldn't bear it. Besides.....”

Exposing the chest area of her dress. Her skin which was as white as snow, and the black pattern that was tattooed there became exposed. The Seraphim, a **Master's Degree** of seven single feathers.

**Manaka:** “This, I don't want to use this on you. Ever.”

Brief words. He could barely sense, the meaning that was included in them.

Once it's a battle where he is clashing all-out with his fellow Servants, naturally, he couldn't deny, that a situation could arrive where he'd be compelled to use the enormous prana that was charged into the Master's Degree. So the girl was avoiding it?





The girl finally changes her expression, to he who was asking her——— “Why?” with his gaze.

———Her cheeks, while slightly dyed red, seemed sad.

———Like a lady, who was confessing, her love.

**Manaka:** “Because, this binds me to you.”

———I don’t want to reduce it down to one stroke.

———Because for now, just this, definitely binds me to you.

Yes, the girl whispered———



Master Degrees.

An angelic hierarchy.

It is a key, that controls an ultimate power which exterminates all obstacles.

In the Holy Grail War, seven magi are bestowed with unparalleled weapons.

Seven classes of seven Heroic Spirits.

One class of spirit per magus who has acquired the rank of an angel.

We refer to these as “Servants”.

A being that transcends magical mysteries.

The most powerful of illusions that people dream about.

Even modern weapons that can burn a town to ashes, could never keep up with them.

Originally it wasn’t believed that they could be employed as a magus-level **mystery familiar**, leaving their names somewhere in history, they are the incarnations of great heroes who have established their legends.

As the strongest most unparalleled beings, it has become possible to summon and manifest them for the first time due to the enormous magical power brought about by the Holy Grail.

Heroic Spirits are powerful, and unusual.

In many cases they achieve the form of a person, but they are essentially not human.

Therefore, Master Degrees are carved onto a Magus’s body.

A fragment of the Holy Grail's power, they can control even Heroic Spirits who are beings that transcend magecraft.

They have a total of 3 strokes.

In other words, it can compel a Heroic Spirit three times, or it can strengthen them.

Without this, the Holy Grail War cannot come into existence.

(An extract from an old notebook)



**Saber:** "Efficient," you said.

Again, he spoke those words. His memory is accurate. Yesterday, he was engraving into his mind the information about the other Masters who had been anticipated at this current time, based on what he had heard from the magi who was that girl and her father.

The noted mage family, the Reiroukan family.

The daughter of the current family head who is regarded as one of the Masters, is said to be close to the same age as this girl. And, she is also an acquaintance. Beyond that he didn't know what to think, but the girl had definitely said, that she was like a friend.

Arranging the information in his memory, he would carefully, choose his words. As a person, he had to follow an honest path. As a person, he must show his people the way to his utopia.

**Saber:** "You said "to target the Master's child." I don't want to make you, do something like kill a friend with your own hands."

**Manaka:** "You're so kind. Saber."

**Saber:** "Manaka."

**Manaka:** "But, I'm fine. You don't have to worry about me."

**Saber:** "People can make mistakes. However, you are wise. Even if you don't choose to make a mistake, you can certainly, achieve your wish by attaining the Holy Grail."

**Manaka:** "Yep."

Vaguely nodding———The girl, is still, smiling at him.

**Manaka:** "If it's for your sake, I'll do anything."

It couldn't reach her. It won't reach her. Although she should be able to hear his remonstrating words, a conversation, isn't being established. Why is that? He was aware of the impatience, that was inside of his heart. Therefore, he rushed to a conclusion. A single definitive word spoken



earlier.

In other words————

**Saber:** “Killing a person, is not a good thing. Manaka”

**Manaka:** “Why?”

Her voice, her words. It, gouged into his chest along with a huge shock. A blow by a huge steel hammer that could be swung on the battlefield, the fangs and claws of a dragon which rages piercing the earth and ripping apart the heavens, it would make one think that it wouldn't even reach those, and it, was a blade brought by words and expressions. But, more than anything————The girl herself, couldn't feel it as the blade, deeply, pierces the inside of his breast. However, still, he won't give up.

A while ago, this girl was happily talking. About the meal. About her younger sister. If that's the case.

Then, there's still hope.

**Saber:** “For example”

Weaving, his words. Again. Still, he won't give up.

**Saber:** “The morning hours that I spent with you, your family. Your dear father and younger sister. That is the same thing. Surely, even to the Reiroukan Master————”

**Manaka:** “Why, do you say such things?”

————Her smile.

**Manaka:** “I've decided, to give the Holy Grail to you.”

————Her radiant eyes

**Manaka:** “I'll grant your wish. So that you can save Britain.”

————Accompanied by even her beauty.

**Manaka:** “If it's for that purpose.”

————A flower, a flower that's brilliantly in full bloom.

**Manaka:** “Then, I can do anything, I'll do anything for you.”

————It's just.

————It's just that the girl, is faintly, softly, smiling at him.



The background of the page is a dark, textured surface with swirling, organic, and somewhat chaotic patterns in shades of black and dark grey. A prominent, thin, light-colored diagonal line runs from the upper right towards the lower left, intersecting the swirling patterns. The overall effect is one of depth and movement.

# Little Lady ACT-3



## Act 3

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### *Even a Heroic Spirit in a girl's love story*

A light————

Despite the light having faded, occasionally, a dazzling light flares up. A concrete material floor that was made to falsely look like bricks will shave by itself. A high pitched metallic clanking noise echoes after a slight delay. At the same time, an exceedingly brutal impact shoots through the area, breaking and scattering the thick trees as if to express the “Wind.” in one word.

The green leaves soar. Pieces of bark go flying about. Street lights smash.  
At the corner of the dark downtown high-rise area.  
There's not a soul, to witness that scene.

Even if someone on the off chance suddenly happens to pass by, in the eyes of ordinary people, it'd probably be difficult for them to guess what was is being carried out here.

At the base of a high-rise building very separated from the JR Ikebukuro station. In the darkness of a city late at night, who would've thought, regardless of whether it is reflected in their eyes or not————that there would be two shadows who were knocking blades while colliding at such super high speeds that their visual information couldn't be recognized by the minds of ordinary people.

As one witnessed this, who could believe it.  
Could it be, that this.

**Lancer:** “Just as I'd expect from the first ranked Servant.”

A voice, resounds. One of the figures, completely stopped in their tracks. Showing themselves. They muttered. While lightly, taking a huge metal mass that was easily probably more than their own body height in one hand————

**Lancer:** “That's quite a sturdy blade you got there. And yet its quick, precise, with not so much as a crack in it.”

Lancer said.

Yes, a “lance.”  
One that's too long.  
Too large.



The metal mass which has a spread shape like a blade with a wide tip, is an object that can only be seen in this current 20<sup>th</sup> century in records such as in books and films, or in the inside of a museum. Spanning a long time since before the Christian Era up to modern times, it was positioned as an important weapon in the conflicts of mankind, and it is an item that many brave warriors entrust their lives to, one that has continued to take lives.

A long-handled blade.  
A flower of the battlefield.  
In other words, “a lance.”

**Lancer:** “Surely.....”

It was a bizarre scene.

At the side of the Sunshine 60 which is the largest skyscraper building in Ikebukuro.  
Under the overhead structure of the Shuto Expressway which even now has a few vehicles occasionally running across it.  
A woman wearing steel armour, holds her excessively long and very large “lance” as so.

**Lancer:** “Surely, you are a hero with some renown, yes?”

—————Yes, she was smiling as she was mumbling it.





*'I see, so it's a lance huh?'*

*'Let's see how great this lance is.'*

*No matter what sort of event the Holy Grail War which is performed by using 7 Heroic Spirits was, basic requisite knowledge has been automatically granted to me by the Holy Grail. A clash of magic by mages, a clash of enormous powers between fellow Heroic Spirits', and the embodiment of their special moves and miracles that's spoken of in heroic epics. Is it a wonder that twists even the laws of physics, a reiteration of a myth or maybe even a type of violation towards the world?*

*The girl before my eyes, holds her huge lance in one hand, and makes it to spin lightly around and around. Although its appearance could generate an illusion that would make one question whether it is made of paper, I can already grasp, the weight of the lance and where the huge blade that can be easily mistaken for a large shield make its tip with my body.*

*A heavy lance.*

*That surpasses human wisdom.*

*It probably, easily exceeds 100 kilograms.*

*Though that's unlikely even if a portion of the grip is made up of a large steel lance. If that's the case, then a lance that huge and excessively heavy is likely an item that surpasses the natural laws. Truly, it is the most fitting weapon to be held by the Heroic Spirit of the Lance.*

???: "I see."

The admiration in his heart———he'll let it ride on his voice. With a figure that's clad in armour shining in blue and silver colours. He———Saber while drawing back his right foot, will lower the tip of his "sword" to his back.

It's one of his specialty **stances**.

In modern times, the opportunity to even swing it on the battlefield has long since gone already———so yes, he'll show, that he can "adopt" his "sword" which should already be a weapon of the past like her lance, with both hands like this.

In order to fight. To cross blades. To face-off against an opponent who carries a lance and imminently stands in his way.

At the base of the high-rise building which boasts a surface height of roughly 240 metres. In the middle of a plaza that was built with fake bricks and made to resemble a mid-size public park at first glance, on truly bad scaffolding, where many loose steps overlapped. Standing on the stairs a few steps ahead of him, and facing the enemy who is looking down at him.....Was a woman who suits the silence of the night.

*Long hair won't necessarily become a shackle on the battlefield, so is it a display of her ability and assurance?*

*A woman of the lance.*

*There was one female lance user amongst my comrades in my training days, but it's like her fighting style differs from hers.  
Nothing also came to mind from his actual memories about her armoured attire either.  
This means that she's a Heroic Spirit from a foreign country that's not Britain.*

**Saber:** “Your sturdy lance is mighty indeed, 4<sup>th</sup> ranked Servant. Lancer.”

**Lancer:** “Oh, so I've been discovered.”

**Saber:** “Unlike mine, yours was easy to discern.”

**Lancer:** “I guess so. Though it's quite lamentable that you won't do me the favour of showing me yours.”

The woman weakly smiles.

Yes, his sword certainly cannot be seen.

It's an invisible sword after all.

*I'm concealing the sword's true form by manipulating refracting light, with a huge volume of air or wind that can be gathered and trapped from its surroundings. Thus, if it's from Lancer———the lance-using Heroic Spirit, then it means, that she is marking the warrior who possesses a perfectly transparent and unclear weapon as her enemy.*

**Lancer:** “It's a difficult item you use. Your invisible weapon, I mean.”

**Saber:** “I'll accept your surrender at any time. A knight by nature, is someone who doesn't swings his sword at a lady.”

**Lancer:** “Oh, you're so kind.”

The woman, doesn't relax her smile.

**Lancer:** “If you insist on being so kind to me, like this———”

The woman moves.

No, the warrior moves.

How much significance does gender difference have in this place? None.

His opponent is a Heroic Spirit. For the manifestation of a legends itself who has carved their name in the intervals of history and even throughout time, leaving themselves in the memories of people, such a small thing has no significance at all. What's there, is just, a miraculous power that comes from having manifested like this, a defiance to the laws of physics, and an overwhelming destruction!

Behold.

Is that a figure of a huge lance, or a metal clump, in the gentle fingertips of Lancer who is approaching him at ultra-high speeds?

The ultra-heavy lance which is being played with lightly in her hands just before, has now disappeared. Was she using wind **prana** like Saber, some sort of magic, or something brought by the effects of her supernatural legend?

All of that is wrong.  
She's simply, just fast.  
Fast.  
Quick.

It is certainly, quick, as it turns guided by Lancer's palm and fingertips, lightly being handled more than a feather from a bird fluttering in the sky, and going no further than to raise its speed to an invisible level.

**Lancer:** "How troubling."

She releases her voice at the same time as her voice. Perceiving it, she released 5 strikes roughly at the same time. The huge lance which was turning at such a high speed that it had been further raised beyond its limits, attacks him, 5 times.

Straight after that, came 5 metallic clanks.

Saber received Lancer's 5 consecutively released lance strikes, with his own sword, direct from the front. His authentic invisible sword blade, deflects the 5 pseudo-invisible strikes with ultra-high speed. An immediate response to its super-heaviness and ultra-high speed. A treason against the natural laws of physics which is similar to taking a bullet that has been rapidly fired, but that is a Heroic Spirit, that is a being called a Servant who fights seeking the Holy Grail.

Blade and a steel blade colliding at high speed. At roughly the same time, a shockwave erupts through the pair's surroundings.

It smashes the imitation bricks.

And one by one, shatters the scarcely surviving streets lights.

**Lancer:** "Splendid."

Her voice, still has a tinge of a smile there. Without responding, Saber pulls back. Immediately after, 5 consecutive strikes assailed the spot where he had been standing, leaving very deep claw marks in the hard-concrete material floor.

A claw.

Yes, a claw.

Already, the lance that Lancer wields has transformed into a "hand." A huge invisible hand is there at the back of her elegant body, along with sharp steel claws at each one of its fingertips, attacking the sky silver knight——— perhaps if there is someone to witness this scene, they'd probably remember it as a delusion.

The "hand" is attacking repetitively.

A repetitive 5 strikes.

At times Saber evades it, sometimes receives it with his sword, falling back completely.



*Evade.*

*Defend.*

*Either is perfect.*

*There's no need to avoid, the usual after-effects of the shockwaves.*

*But, I must attack at some point.*

*The reach of the strikes caused by her long-shafted lance is long, nevertheless if she keeps coming at me with these repeated ultra-high-speed attacks, then it'll be difficult for me to counter-attack with my blade which has an inferior strike range.*

*However.....*

He avoided the five consecutive strikes for a total of 7 times, but straight after that.....

**Saber:** “————ngh!”

Saber alters his strike. Although the five consecutive strikes have a wondrous technique to it, it's too monotonous. Too **soft**. First, I'll slip pass her invisible “hand” with a paper-thin difference, and just like that, I'll flash my blade while rotating my body which is covered in silver armour sideways. And mow her straight down at once.

*This sword that's clad in wind, that blade edge, will be swung with one hand, and not with both as it has been till now. As I let my body turn, it'll be a one-handed blow brought by my half-bodied stance. This far longer reach than when I use both hands, will reach Lancer's slender body which ought to be in the shape to protect herself with her huge lance's attack range!*

He penetrates her chest armour which appears to be compiled of prana, and in that instant.....Flames danced.

The fire covers Saber's vision. Regardless, he, charges power into the hand that clasps the sword. And pushes the blade in.

*I must pierce the enemy's heart, and cram the tip of my blade into it. But. Her reaction is weak. Taking a glance, Lancer's figure is largely separated from mine. It's not a range I can reach if I swing my sword. Again, a distance where I need to shorten the gap.*

**Lancer:** “.....You're rather formidable.”

At last, the smile disappeared from Lancer's voice.

**Saber:** “Is that all you've got? You, the one who has persisted with these all too monotonous attacks.”

**Lancer:** “Oh, so again, I've been discovered. O' kind one. Is this perhaps an expression of your mercy to try and end it in one blow, by targeting my heart?”

**Saber:** “If it's mercy.”

Again, he preps his invisible sword.

There are many ways to shorten the gap.

Still, Saber hasn't shown some of his cards yet.

But, it's, probably the same for she who holds the lance.

There's no way she could've formed her being as a Heroic Spirit, simply by just manipulating an ultra-heavy lance and making it larger.

The possibility of her concealing her trump card is also very high. For example————

**Lancer:** “O’ kind one. Kind Servant. If you insist on being so kind to me, then .....

Like this. She had produced from somewhere, something like a small vial that indeed looks like a magical item.

**Lancer:** “It will bother me.”

Lancer immediately gulped down, the made red liquid which filled the small vial. Quietly. Still with her gaze towards him.



One of the multi-residential apartment buildings that is lined up roughly close to the Sunshine 60 building, Toshima prefecture, Ikebukuro.

A roof which shouldn't have anyone on it.

A time, that's already suitable enough to be called early dawn rather than express it as midnight.

The building which held various business services on each floor is uninhabited on all levels, and it should have been the same with the roof as well.

However, there is one girl there.

One would probably call it, some kind of————bizarre scene. The person who shouldn't be there is there like it's natural for her to be there, and it's the same as the lance user from before in a sense, however the presences that came with them are different. If the one from before was an aggressive bizarreness which rips apart those who approach her, then what, is this? How should he express it?

At least for the Saber of this moment, he couldn't find the words to compare it to. Arriving “here” at the agreed upon spot, he stares back, at the girl's whole smile.

**Saber:** “Manaka”

Briefly, he calls the girl's name.

Manaka Sajyou.

His master as a Servant.

A magus.

*My sole Master, who challenges the Holy Grail War to obtain the Holy Grail with me.*

*Manaka, sits quietly on top of a camp sheet that's spread out on one corner of the roof, she appears to have been waiting for me to come here.  
For the moment, she has a huge basket and a portable thermos with her.*

**Manaka:** “You’re here right on time. You’re so amazing, Saber.”

*She says, as she pours black tea with rising steam from the thermos into a cup.*

**Manaka:** “Right, I’ve just about finished making my preparations too. See, will you please be seated?”

Radiantly, she calls out to me with such a whole smile.

It’s like, like she’s a girl of marriageable age who came for a date to a huge park, and decides to play enough for an entire day off.

No.

It might be that I have these types of strong emotions for Manaka.

I spread out myself on the sheet. Like this, she hands over the warm drink to me.

**Manaka:** “I took you outside, I somehow exposed you to danger, and I was absolutely against it, but.....”

While tilting her head a bit, she smiles.

**Manaka:** “But. If I had known that **waiting together** like this would be something enjoyable, then it’s scary.”

**Saber:** “Scary?”

**Manaka:** “After all, it makes it seem like I want to go out again and again, even though I.....”

**Saber:** “..... That is troubling.”





I retort with my non-deceitful thoughts. It's not that my body is shivering to the coldness of the night, although the hot tea is pleasant. As I moisten my throat with a gulp of it, I quietly consider, whether I should somehow admonish my Master for her very ill-advised words. Though the words didn't come out immediately. After all, I'd just discovered with my body, the other day, that it wasn't necessarily limited to sending my words from over here to my lovely and even pretty Master.

And then———

Since it was still dinner, with that, Manaka opens the nearby basket, and starts spreading out the food she prepared.

There's bread with lots of ingredients sandwiched in it, and something that was flavoured with salt and rolled up into rice———

**Manaka:** "Sandwiches or Rice balls, which do you prefer?"

Honestly speaking, I haven't tasted either of them before.

They're probably dishes from the modern era. I haven't heard of them nor seen them, in my homeland before.

**Manaka:** "Have you heard of the Earl of Sandwich? He's Britain's, no your future.....no, if you look at it from now then it's the past, uhh, just forget it, however that noble was the one who created this. The Earl came up with the idea of it because he wanted to enjoy his games without taking time out for meal times, and he was kind of a, a strange person, I think."

As she smiles, Manaka gently takes out the bread.

**Manaka:** "So, this is well. A meal fit enough for a middle of a game."

**Saber:** "I see."

I bite into the item that had been handed to me.

It's good.

It was an item with toast which had been fried brown on its front and back sides with ingredients sandwiched into it. The way it was made had fresh vegetables such as tomatoes and fresh lettuce inserted on either side of the roast chicken and cheese, which was then further inserted into the toast. The many juicy and fresh tomatoes, very much suits the meat and cheese.

Indeed, I can feel that it's a matching item.

In the era that he once lived in, fresh vegetables were extremely precious items. However, in this city of 1991 CE, there's no one who'd speak that.

**Manaka:** "..... Good?"

**Saber:** "Yes."

I nod, as I eat.

Although the Earl's name hadn't been attached to it, the custom of eating ingredients inserted into bread itself was something that had been passed down in Britain, since the time of Ancient Rome. Saber honestly nodded.

*The bread which I eat like this, ever since before I———*

**Saber:** "I like it."

*Since way before.  
I've liked it.*

Those words of his were not a lie.

Saber who didn't hesitate to mention that he was a king and a knight at the same time, didn't rarely tell a lie.

So, for now, he'll simply state the facts.

**Manaka:** "Just.....now....."

*Manaka, is flustered?*

**Saber:** "Hm?"

Chew chew.

As she stuffs the sandwich into her mouth, she looks at me.

**Manaka:** "Just, now, I guess....."

Manaka's cheeks flare up.

**Saber:** "Hm?"

Chew chew.

*Next, I think I'll try eating some of that rolled up rice thing.*

**Manaka:** "I think, I'm just a bit overly self-conscious, I guess."

Like I thought, Manaka's cheeks are red.

*This is better.*

Yes, he thinks.

*For example, this cruel behaviour of hers like when she told her father about tonight's "strategy," doesn't really suit a girl her age.*

*This is better.*

*With the healthy red tinging her sweet cheeks. the radiance of a fairy and the brightness of a flower suits her a lot better than this.*

**Manaka:** “You’re so mean. Saber.”

Saying that, she puffs up her cheeks as if to sulk.  
Manaka pouts her lips.

———*A lovely girl.*

‘Yes,’ Saber thinks from the depths of his heart.  
*Thus, I am compelled to think of the dangers of her throwing herself into the cruelty of the Holy Grail War. For example, it’s true that even now, in this moment.....The Holy Grail War has already started.*

The **first ever historical** large-scaled magic war.

A mutual slaughter where magi who wield mysteries and Heroic Spirits who can force even the most powerful of physical laws to be subordinate to them will kill each other, but.....Even though it is, she had proved that she could safely go out like this, and so on. However, these actions are far too dangerous.

*More than anything, she’s too **overprotective** of me ---- a Servant.*

Until the very end, Manaka had opposed the idea of taking Saber outside. The other day, Manaka who was unyielding even to her father who was preaching to her about the vitality of tactics and strategy in the Holy Grail War, and how Servants were their fighting strength and the key to all their movements, had refused to expose Saber to danger, and stubbornly said this.....

**Manaka:** “*I’ll do something about it myself.*”

And thus, there shouldn’t be any way for her to survive. If it was your regular magus, then they’d probably wouldn’t even survive for half a day.

But.  
She, was special.

**Manaka:** “*That’s it!*”

**Manaka:** “*I just came up with a great idea, Saber!*”

Manaka who smiled as she said this, suddenly, spun around and proposed tonight’s patrol. In other words, it was an active patrol for the other Servants and Masters in this late at night city. Manaka and Saber would act separately, carry out intelligence gathering, and meet up with each other at this spot in early dawn. And then..... Of course, he had argued against it.

He had, but Manaka hadn’t listened to him.

**Saber:** “I confronted a Servant, just now. It’s probably———”

Swallowing the sandwich, I briefly tell her. About the start of the Holy Grail War, and the previous battle just now. The encounter with Lancer, the fourth ranked Servant. And that after they had fought for a number, she quickly retreated immediately after having taken something. Whether the small vial that she produced is her “**Noble Phantasm**” is still unclear for now.

**Manaka:** “Hmm.....”

Manaka only nods uninterested.

As Saber gently tries to scold her with an “*Master if you are separated from me, then you mustn’t take independent action, if our positions were reversed, you would’ve been exposed to danger,*” but she just calmly———

**Manaka:** “Fufu, were you worried about me?”

**Saber:** “Of course I was.”

**Manaka:** “Don’t be such a worrywart, Saber. Yep, I wonder if its cause you’re kind. But don’t worry. I’d immediately know, if someone was approaching us.”

I try to smile and slightly say, “*it’s not nothing.*”

Certainly, I know that a barrier has been attached to this building with magic. Although he who is not sensitive to magic is there, it wouldn’t be difficult for a Servant to sense the magic of this place, after all they are beings who are standing here now because of prana.

There’s a barrier here. Additionally, it’s not a simple one like one that’s been made in a day. It’s a powerful barrier, fitting for a first ranked magus who holds seven feathers. If it’s a normal person or an average magus, they’d wouldn’t be able to come up to the second floor let alone the roof.

However, the Servants we confront are all powerful Heroic Spirits.

How far could they get through this modern magus’ barrier?

More importantly, the existence of a barrier itself basically shouts that “there’s a magus here.”

Truthfully, I think that Lancer had probably shown herself, because the magus who is Lancer’s Master had probably sensed the existence of the barrier that Manaka has spread over this building.

**Saber:** “No, it’s too dangerous. Let’s say.....yes, if it was Servant Assassin.”

**Manaka:** “If it’s about Assassin then it’s fine. I’ve came to an arrangement with her, just now.”

**Saber:** “Huh?”

*Came to an arrangement?*

**Manaka:** “It’s not like I beat her up. But, she’s, not our enemy anymore.”

**Saber :** “By, not an enemy. What do you exactly mean by that?”

**Manaka:** “That I took care of her, silly.”



Without any hesitation———She said it with an expression that still had the radiance of a blooming flower on it. In that instant, Saber ponders on her words.

*A single magus, against a Servant Heroic Spirit?  
I, didn't feel the unique presence of a Servant tonight.*

The prerequisite knowledge the Holy Grail brings, right, imprints even the general etiquette of Servant battles into Saber's mind.

*A strange pressure like that of the one that I felt when I faced Lancer, if that is the unique presence of a Servant, then I can puff my chest out with pride and say that I didn't feel the existence of any Heroic Spirits besides Lancer at this downtown area tonight.*

*Of course, considering if it is Assassin who has the "Presence Concealment" skill which allows them to erase their presence with their own mind then it is possible.*

He himself, was also worried about it.

*'But, a magus confronting a Servant one on one, and coming out safe.'*

*It's not something that I can believe so offhandedly.  
Even so———*

**Manaka:** "It's safe here. There are no Servants or Magi within 3 kilometres of the surrounding area."

*I can't feel, the lies, in Manaka's words or eyes.  
It was her clear eyes.  
It was her serene voice.  
And there's.....such a loveliness, and, sweetness, in that smile.*

**Manaka:** "Hey, Saber."

*There is some sort of passion, there———*

**Manaka:** "Since I took care of a Servant by myself....."

*It was the radiance of a fairy.  
The brightness of a flower.  
However, would a fairy, or a flower be approaching me like this?*

*Our distance....  
Is close.*

As he notices her, the girl's slightly florid cheeks were immediately right in front of Saber's face.

**Manaka:** “May I have a reward———?”

With a voice brimming with hope, Manaka said it thusly. Quietly.  
Still with her gaze towards him.



**Manaka:** “Tha, tha, that’s so mean. You’re not playing fair. Doing such a…….”

With a small voice, Manaka continues saying something while pouting. Whether she didn’t have a problem with that as her “reward” judging by her reaction, is somehow……  
For Manaka who set her hands on his shoulders, the action that Saber chose was a kiss.

A kiss.  
Gently, to the forehead.

**Manaka:** “That is, sure, I thought, I thought that, suddenly kissing, somehow, might’ve been too fast, but, but, I’m happy, yeah about the forehead, I’m happy you touched it, but, that is, umm you see…….”

*Embarrassed, and happy.*  
*A girl who gets flustered and turns red.*

*It pleasantly no further reflects, the state of the small lady.*  
*That is, it seems to be very suitable behaviour, for one her age.*

———*This child, is probably pure.*  
———*That much is certain.*

He thinks of a certain colour.  
It is, white.

*A white that is pure with nothing drawn on it yet.*

*An untainted white———*  
*Or.*

*Is it an absolute white, that could paint over all of creation?*





# Little Lady ACT-4



## Act 4

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*The strategy of life never appears out of darkness*

**Student A (Kyoko)<sup>3</sup>:** “Hey hey, do you know? About that rumour.”

**Student B (Nao):** “I know I know, it’s that right, Miss Mary.....”

**Student A (Kyoko):** “Yeah, yeah. Miss Mary.”

**Student B (Nao):** “I’ve heard the exact same story in my cram school too. It’s becoming a rumour even in the nearby schools too.”

**Student A (Kyoko):** “Tokyo, right? Yeah, it seems the rumour about Miss Mary is only in Tokyo.”

**Student B (Nao):** “Is it true?”

**Student A (Kyoko):** “It’s a true story, after all it’s happening in Tokyo.”

**Student B (Nao):** “But, I haven’t seen it on TV.”

**Student A (Kyoko):** “It just hasn’t been shown on TV yet.”

*‘What story are talking about? A rumour. That’s only in Tokyo. Mary. Miss Mary?’*

For Ayaka Sajyou, it was a topic that she didn’t really know about.

While chewing and nomming on the school lunch bread that she was holding with both hands, she was vaguely overhearing the conversation between her two female classmates who had precisely lined up and joined their desks together.

*‘Today’s menu is a bread roll, a dark coloured stew, and a fresh vegetable salad.’*

*‘The same old bread roll. The same old taste. ‘*

*‘Although I actually do like deep fried bread, I don’t especially think of it as dissatisfying since it’s not something that appears every day. I just, ah, think, that it’s a bit of a pity. But, today it’s a bit pleasing since it came with marmalade jam.’*

Ripping the small plastic wrapping with a snap, I push out its contents and eat the attached bread, bit by bit.

*‘I like marmalade better than margarine. I don’t hate sweet things.’*

Taking a bite.

I bit into the bread.

*‘The taste is always different, thanks to the bittersweet marmalade. I don’t hate it. It’s my favourite food group.’*

**Student A (Kyoko):** “Her name, did you hear it?”

**Student B (Nao):** “Her name....”

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<sup>3</sup> Kyoko and Nao: names from the Drama CDs



**Student A (Kyoko):** “Miss Mary’s name. Hmm, rather than Miss Mary’s name, maybe it’s the name of the rumour?”

**Student B (Nao):** “I have no idea. What is it?”

**Student A (Kyoko):** “I’ve heard that she will always call out to you at 11 p.m.”

**Student B (Nao):** “Yeah”

**Student A (Kyoko):** “And then, her companions will die without fail.”

**Student B (Nao):** “Yeah.”

**Student A (Kyoko):** “So, they say, Death Mary comes to kill you at 11:00 pm.”

11:00 pm.

Death Mary.

It feels like I came and overheard a dangerous story.

**Ayaka:** (*I wonder what they’re talking about?*)

The ones chatting, were always chatting away about something at lunch time. There was a girl (*Kyoko*) who apparently went 3 days a week to the cram school next to the station, and a girl (*Nao*) who always seemed to be watching TV.

Since I’ve never played with them after or outside school, I wouldn’t exactly know what’s going on with them, either way. Although I don’t think that the two of them are particularly lying. The two of them seem to be talking about a rumour.

Since I’ve gotten used to listening in on someone’s chat, I try to listen to their talk, while holding another mouthful of bread in my mouth, ‘Hamu,’ and repeatedly chewing. Could I understand them even from now on?

I couldn’t listen to them properly, because at first, I was more concentrating on carefully removing the marmalade from its container.

11 p.m. Death Mary.

I guess I’ll try to chase them up later, and make sure to carefully hear it from them.  
But, I won’t ask them about it by myself.

Anyway, even if I were to open my mouth and say something, I don’t watch a lot of TV, I don’t even go to cram school, and I barely get one issue of Girls Manga Magazine per month, so I have a fainter feeling than usual, that I probably wouldn’t mix well with the gossip of elementary school girls who are the same age as me.

So, I’ll just use my mouth for my meal. Chew Chew.  
But, I’ll simply catch the information by just concentrating on my ears.

**Ayaka:** (*Nnh*)

It was, a rumour. Of a foreign girl who gently calls out to adults.

**Ayaka:** (*A girl....*)

It was, at night. When the girl would appear in the middle of the street late at night.

**Ayaka:** (*At night?*)

It was, death. She brings death without fail in accordance to her name.

**Ayaka:** (*.....Die. Does she kill them?*)

Like I guessed, it was a dangerous story.

It was a rumour.

A friend of a friend, or, a friend of a friend's Dad, or, a person who works for that friend of a friend's Dad, or something like that. A strange story which had been specifically received like they had seen it, however vaguely from someone who hadn't directly seen or had known about it, like that.

I have heard about this sort of thing before. I can immediately recall it.

*For example, wasn't there a **dog with the face of a person** that was popular in class last year during the second semester? It's the same story as that. A dark rumour, whispered amongst children. A school ghost story? Or, one of the school's seven wonders?*

*'I wonder if it's the same as that,' Ayaka thinks faintly.*

Like the number of stairs that are more going up than going down, or the anatomical doll in the Science prep room that walks by itself, or the portrait of the musician in the music room whose eyes move, or the girl who lives in the toilet, stuff like that. If it's not connected with the school, then there's the slit-mouthed woman, the mirror that turns purple, the white string that exits from the earlobes, and the blue and red paper, moreover————

**Ayaka:** (*There's just table turning*)

I think it's something like doing make-believe necromancy, where you place a 5-yen coin on top of a piece of paper with Japanese syllabary written down on it that appeared to imitate a Ouija board.

When they invited me to do it during one lunchbreak around Spring with an "Ayaka, you do it too," I stared at these girls wondering if they could possibly be from a Magus bloodline, but there was nothing to it, it was just, a silly kid's game.

Like who is the one we liked?

The person that we disliked, our dislikes, the things we scared of, we asked those sorts of things. Without invoking any sort of magic, that someone within our group who had placed their finger on



the 5-yen coin just drags it. Now that I think about it, it was these two that came and invited me that time.

*The two that like to gossip.*

*The very cowardly, twosome.*

**Student B (Nao):** “All of them died.....”

**Student A (Kyoko):** “That’s right. Everyone who met that person. Couldn’t be saved.”

**Student B (Nao):** “No way, I’m scared.”

See.

She said, she was scared.

**Student A (Kyoko):** “I’ve heard that a person who saw the mirror also died. I wonder, if they died because they touched it.”

**Student B (Nao):** “Eh, is that true?”

**Student A (Kyoko):** “It’s true. After all, I heard a lot of policemen have died too.”

**Student B (Nao):** “That’s scary.....”

I think it’s weird.

The contents of the rumors, were definitely, about terrible and horribly dangerous stuff. A foreigner “Miss Mary” calls out to an adult male who is returning home from his late-night job and enters a hotel with him. The next morning, the figure of the girl, Mary, disappears with just one sentence, ‘*Welcome to the world of death!*’ written on a mirror in English with crimson-red lipstick. With the same red kiss mark, next to the exclamation mark.

The man is dead on top of the bed. The cause unknown. Even though he wasn’t injured, what do you suppose the reason for him dying was? I’m also told, that it’s becoming news.

The ones being targeted are only adult males with not even one woman being picked off, and in the girl, who commutes to cram school’s story, a friend of her Dad’s in the next town had also been killed in the same manner.

Or.

Ayaka: *(It’s not a school ghost story at all)*

‘A school ghost story, or rather an adult ghost story. A ghost story to fathers who go home by walking through the streets late at night. Compared to the one about the dog with a human face, I feel there’s a sense of realness to this story. But, at the same time last year, I don’t think I was even a bit scared.’

I think it’s creepy, although if I say that I’m scared because I don’t have a clue about what is “Miss Mary” is thinking, or what she’s done in the first place, then I probably can’t say that I’m scared, but still, I have never actually felt fear before so.....

That’s because Ayaka, already knew.

If it's a piece of gossip that's been sublimated into a mystery, then it's probably been endowed with power too. Something to the extent of a rumour spoken between children, is not enough for all of that.

*'At least, Papa wouldn't say that a mysterious human faced dog actually exists. Besides————'*

**Ayaka:** *(My Papa is just fine)*

I quietly think, while drinking a bottle of milk. After all, there's only a few who risk going out and returning home late at night, with many people staying at home. It's alright. And, even if, the murderer actually does exist, it's not like it's going to stop the mysterious-like rumours of the aforementioned "Miss Mary" which has been whispered about by elementary school girls from making the rounds.

I can't do anything about it either.

Which is why, I'm not scared.

Same as last year.

Although I can't say this to any of my classmates.

—————*It's because, my Papa is a Magus.*

—————*It's because he's person who deals with real mysteries.*

*It's some sort, of ghost story. That's why, I'm not going to lose against some gossip, better yet a real **Phantasmal Species**.*

**Ayaka:** "Yeah"

Muttering a little.

Ayaka, bites into the bread, again.





A beast which has been imagined.  
A being only spoken of in old legends.  
We have given them the name "Phantasmal Species" to indicate this.

Not equal to any known lifeform, these beings which have transformed their appearances into mysteries themselves, have been divided by court rank into divine beasts, phantasmal beasts, and monstrous beasts.

It is also possible for a Magus to employ them, if they are a being to the level of a monstrous beast.  
There are also examples where part of their corpses, have been utilised as a Magus's mystic code.  
If it's a being that surpasses Phantasmal Beasts, then both are also possible.

First, a person has no chance of witnessing one in the modern era.  
Servants, can easily destroy this common sense.  
For they far surpass magical mysteries.

They can conquer the illusions that people dream of.  
In other words, they, in time, could get to employ even beings that go beyond Phantasmal Beasts.  
In the Holy Grail War, we, can use mythological mysteries through the Servants.

Thus, you should never forget your dreams.  
Keep them a secret.  
Conceal it.

The disclosure of mysteries is a taboo for Magi.  
The Holy Grail War, must be carried out in darkness.

(An extract from an old notebook)



Later, after school————

The sun was totally going down, when I was returning home.  
It's definitely, the season's fault, for the sun sinking so fast.



It's good evidence for why the breath I exhale is starting to turn white, the same as it did this morning.

I can see it clearly with my eyes.

It's a bit, cold.

Ayaka blew out a "Haa" into both her hands.

If it's come to this, then I think it would've been better if had brought gloves with me.

**Ayaka:** "Cold."

I stop at the front gate.

As I look at it like this, it certainly appears to be a large house in its own way.

My classmates who live nearby are calling it a "mansion" and although I guess those words don't instinctively come to me when I see it, I think about whether it's little larger on the inside rather than the outside, just speaking on its size.

Even so, regardless of how the structure is inside, I don't feel it's an exaggeration to call it a mansion somewhat, because I know mostly everything about it besides **the room that I can't enter**.

The slightly bigger one, is my house.

My homeroom teacher was saying during her home visitation, that it's a western style house. Beyond the gate, I can see the trees in the front yard and the western architectural styled porch.

The gate.....

Although it's not locked with a key, I can't go inside by just pushing it normally with my hands. Papa was saying that he had extended the barrier, and he also informed of the reason behind it, too. It's something about participating in a large "magic ritual," or something like that?

Personally, I don't mind going to elementary school, you told me that I must, although you sternly warned me to be careful whenever I go inside or outside the house. (\*She's addressing her Papa mentally with this.)

I follow the steps as I've been told.

After checking that there's no one in the area, I say a few words. After that, I trace the shape of the path that I was taught with my finger on the metal fixtures, close to the gate's handle. Although I'm still not very skilful at it, I charge my prana.

Yes, I can't do it well at all.

If I could, then it wouldn't have taken me more than 5 minutes of time to do a deed that should have been settled in mere seconds.

**Ayaka:** “I wonder, if I did it more quickly than yesterday.”

I mutter, as I push the gate.

The gate which was as solid as a stone wall, smoothly opens for me without delay.

Behind it is, the same ordinary house again.

Gripping the gate, I tightly shut it.

**Ayaka:** “I’m back.”

I mumble, slightly.

If it’s around this time, then Papa and Big Sis are not in the living room, and generally, they are mostly doing something either in the room that I can’t enter or in the room that I mustn’t enter, so I know there’s not much meaning in doing it, because no-one has stuck out their face or even called out to me.

But, for now.

I’ll say it.

It’s a daily custom.

I’ll say, “I’m home,” when I come back home.

And someone says, “welcome back,” when I get back home.

**Ayaka:** “Welcome home.”

Since there’s no one here, I’ll just say to myself again for today too.

Proceeding through the front yard, I open the front door————

**Ayaka:** “Huh?”

*‘Is there some sort of a nice smell?’*

Suddenly, I recall that early morning from a couple of days ago and my mind relaxes thinking, ‘No way…….’

*‘This fragrant smell of baking wheat flour, it’s the same as the one that I smelt yesterday, so if I definitely go into the kitchen, then maybe I might be able to meet her.’*

The person who I couldn’t meet with this morning.

Yes, on this morning, I was alone during meal time, and alone again during **my daily chores**.

As I exit the entrance hall still holding onto my Randsell backpack, I head through the hallway to the kitchen.

As I did so, in there was————

**Manaka:** “Oh, welcome back. Ayaka.”

A pretty voice.  
A pretty face.

Despite it being evening.

Even though it's already dark, dazzling and glittering.....  
My older sister, Manaka, was smiling in her apron-clad figure.



**Ayaka:** “Big Sis, what are you making?”

**Manaka:** “Fufu. What do you think I’m making?”

**Ayaka:** “I think it’s cake. Because it’s smells nice.”

**Manaka:** “Oh, so close. But well, I guess you are half-right.....”

As she says it, her smiling figure is verrry pretty.  
*Big Sis Manaka.*

*It’s the same her that I saw on that morning, a few days ago, with her princess in a castle apron-like figure, see, she’s dancing and spinning around again for today too.*

*‘It’s just like that anime film that my Mum liked and got to show to Papa. a long time ago. Of a princess who dances as she sings.’*

*‘A beautiful person. It’s just like, I’m in that film.’*

*‘My eyes are not my eyes, surely, they’re some sort of a camera that projects film.’*  
*‘They’re projecting my big sister.’*

As I think in such a manner, I completely space out.

**Manaka:** “What’s wrong, your eyes are so wide open? Your mouth is also open, Ayaka.”

**Ayaka:** “Eh?”

Her white fingertips, they were at a distance where I could and couldn’t touch her. But, I couldn’t touch them.  
I’m just on verge though.

**Ayaka:** “It’s because you’re so pretty, Big Sis. You’re like a princess.”

**Manaka:** “Is that so?”

**Ayaka:** “Yeah.”

I really.....  
.....think so.

**Manaka:** “Do I appear like a British princess to you?”

**Ayaka:** “British?”

**Manak a:** “Fufu. Yeah, but if I really did appear that way to you, then that makes me happy.”

Big Sis smiles, the same as she did on that morning a few days ago.

*‘She’s sparkling. Like, she’s dazzling and glittering. It’s already evening, there’s no sunrise, and even though the setting sun is about to fall……. She’s twirling around the kitchen, while cooking meals so joyfully in her aproned figure.’*

*‘She’s sparkling.’*

*‘But, she’s moving her hands so perfectly, so quickly, and with good adeptness …….’*

*‘She’s executing it well.’*

*‘She’s not holding a kitchen knife today, instead, she’s carrying **various** scales in her hands.’*

*‘I wonder what she’s making?’*

*‘If the cake part is half-correct, then what’s the remaining half?’*

As I was about to ask that, I noticed my appearance. Again, I was carrying my Randsell backpack on my back, in addition, I hadn’t washed my hands yet. So, after I rush over to the washroom and place down my personal stand, I wash my hands with cold water, and rinse out my mouth too.

I place my backpack in the hallway.

Again, I head to the kitchen————

**Ayaka:** “Big Sis, umm....”

I’m a little uncertain about whether I should ask her, “Can I help out too?” I stop at the entrance of the kitchen which I had entered just now, without hesitation.

Unlike my Big Sis who can do anything, I know that regardless of whether it’s magic, studies, being a housemaid————or anything else at all, I normally rank further beneath her than that, so, it might be better for Big Sis Manaka to do it herself rather than to have me help her.

I believe it to be true.

Chew Chew.

As I did so, Big Sis kept turning towards my hands, and utters a single word.

**Manaka:** “Help. Will you help me?”

It was a soft voice. Though I had no way of knowing what kind of face Big Sis was making,



because I couldn't see her from over here. Surely, I think 'She's kept a smile.' Surely, she'll give me that same face as before.

I had often imagined Big Sis's smiling face which I hadn't seen for a long time, like this, but I had no idea until the morning of that moment what it'd looked like.

I give a huge nod and utter a "Yep!"

**Manaka:** "Okay then, perhaps you can grab me that jar on the shelf over there for me?"

**Ayaka:** "U, umm"

**Manaka:** "The baking powder, 'kay."

**Ayaka:** "Ahh, oh. Got it, Big Sis."

**Manaka:** "And now, please remove the eggs out of the refrigerator for me, okay. Oh, and please choose the two biggest ones for me."

**Ayaka:** "O, okay."

**Manaka:** "Fufu. Seems they're not broken. Now, if can you straighten up the top of the table over there, we....."

*'Could it be?*

*'Yeah, even if it's not it, maybe it is.'*

*'It's not just taking out the plates, this is the first time, today, that I've helped out with Big Sis's cooking.'*

Though Papa tells me, "Don't touch the oven by myself," it's a different story if I'm together with Big Sis, but, there's not much chance of that happening yet.

*'I————It's the first time I'm helping Big Sis. If I understand right, I feel a little bit too nervous. After all, Big Sis definitely doesn't really need my help, so.....'*

**Ayaka:** "U, umm, eggs, wha, how many was it....."

**Manaka:** "Two. Don't worry, we still have a few eggs left, so if at that moment they break, then they'll break, so everything's a-okay!"

**Ayaka:** "Y, yeah."

**Manaka:** "Besides, I've already prepared plenty of spares for them and all the other stuff."

**Ayaka:** "Kay...."

**Manaka:** "Fufu. Your voice, is quivering. Do you perhaps hate carrying eggs, Ayaka?"

**Ayaka:** "N, nah uh."

I'm so slow.

I'm doing it, so, incredibly slow.

But, just by quickly looking at her, Big Sis Manaka isn't particularly mad with me.

I knew I couldn't see her face, but I still could hear her laugh.

**Ayaka:** "Here you go, here's the eggs."

**Manaka:** “Thanks. You made sure to carry them properly, you’re remarkable.”

**Ayaka:** “N, no, I’m not.”

To get something like this for just carrying some eggs, somehow, I seem a little pathetic.  
Naturally I look down.

**Ayaka:** “Now the rest was.....”

**Manaka:** “Speaking of eggs, hmm let’s see, Ayaka. Do you like, sunny side up eggs?”

**Ayaka:** “Um, y, yeah”

**Manaka:** “Sunny side up? Or turnover?”

**Ayaka:** “I prefer sunny.....”

Suddenly, it came out of my mouth.

*‘A lie————’*

*‘No.’*

*‘It’s not really, a lie.’*

*‘It’s not something to lie about.’*

*‘The ones I really like are Turnover eggs, but, I prefer the sunny side-up eggs that my Papa and Big Sis, Manaka, make for me and since I haven’t thought that I’ve particularly hated them, it’s not a lie.’*

*‘I don’t hate them.’*

*‘I like them both.’*

*‘But, it’s now just a talk, about me unreasonably saying whether I like them or not.’*

**Manaka:** “This time, I’ll make turnover eggs too. It seems like a lot of people like turnover eggs in England. I’ve made them before, but I’ll do a test run of it first, because they haven’t come out nicely yet.”

**Ayaka:** “O, okay.”

**Manaka:** “You’ll give it a try too, right.”

**Ayaka:** “Yeah.”

**Manaka:** “Hihii. It’s so tasty.”

As she said that. Big Sis showed me her smiling face again.

*‘It’s such a pretty smile.’*

*‘It’s so glittering, like a flower that’s more beautiful than any of the other kinds of flowers that bloom in Garden.’*

*‘She’s not a phantasmal fairy, but more like a cute and noble fairy like the ones that appear in picture books.’*

*‘Besides, I knew it, she’s like a princess in a castle.’*

**Manaka:** “Hihii.”

*'Huh?'*

*'Big Sister, she's the same as that morning, but she feels slightly off.'*

*'But it's not, a seemingly happy kind of feeling————'*

*'I wonder, if **something good** happened to her?'*

I think so.

Tilting my neck, I slowly try to look up at Big Sis's face from underneath her.

Straightaway, Big Sis returns my gaze with a "huh?"

**Manaka:** "Whaat?"

**Ayaka:** "Ah, u, umm, you se...."

I had been totally hasty. So hasty, that she noticed me. I'm spacing out, I'm in a rush, and now I've becoming careless about my helping out. "Did something good happen to you," just how many seconds did it take for me to come up with something like that?

**Manaka:** "Oh my, does it appear that way to you?"

**Ayaka:** "Yep."

**Manak a:** "It was nothing that special, not a good thing really, although....."

As she touches her index finger to her lips, with a "hmm." Even that one gesture is so pretty, and, wonderful.

**Manaka:** "You see, there's this funny animal, who's gotten quite attached to me."

**Ayaka:** "An animal?"

**Manaka:** "Yes. An animal."

Saying it, Big Sis smiles.

Without looking towards me.

She stares off to somewhere else, while I .....

For some reason—————Feel this, indescribable, terribly cold **shiver** run up my spine at this treasured possession.

I, utterly drop the items that I was holding in my hands.

Some of the eggs, broke.



*Servants.*

*Heroic Spirits who have manifested.*

*Saber.*

*Berserker.*

*Archer.*

Lancer.  
Rider.  
Caster.  
Assassin.

*The most powerful illusions that have been divided into seven classes by the Holy Grail.  
They are very powerful.  
As mentioned above.*

*They can split steel, smash the earth, and even pierce the sky.  
They who have been constructed with temporary bodies by magic, are not proper living creatures.  
Even if they do possess an appearance that resembles a human, they are not human.*

*Hiding destructive power and a tenacity that far surpasses a human's, or a creature's, they manifest as they were in their legends.*

*But, they are also not omnipotent beings.*

*They who have become an existence through prana and likewise run on the same prana, are allowed to manifest for the first time by being provided prana from the Magus who is to be their Master.  
To be precise, a simple minuscule amount of prana taken from a magus-level human is not their food, so don't mistake this as a straight-forward expression of them.*

*They cannot exist without prana.  
In other words, they cannot exist without a Master.  
Although as an exception, there are----*

(An extract from an old notebook)



11 P.M.

A high-rise street-cornered building situated in West Shinjuku, Shinjuku Prefecture in the Tokyo Metropolitan Area.

It was a place where all kinds of green trees were growing, and where figures could be seen beside the concrete townscape known as the new city urban centre.



Shinjuku Central Park.

One of Shinjuku prefecture's biggest leading green urban spaces.

If this was daytime, then one would probably see the figures of businessmen who work in the high-rise buildings, puffing their tobacco smoke in the shade of the trees during their one-hour break, however, usually at this time, those traces of human life were almost gone.

It's rare for this place to be completely uninhabited. At night, there are homeless people who sleep here and endure the coldness of the night air in the darkness cast by the trees.

For they, are the true colours of those few signs of human life. However, at that time, there wasn't a sign of anyone in that place.

The homeless people were disappearing.

The reason, I will not talk about it here.

But, they were disappearing.

In their place, was just one human shadow.

It was a slender figure.

It was a figure that suits the blackness which devours the night.

It was, the figure of a young girl————

It was the body, of an elegant and vibrant woman.

Although her head was covered by a thick hood, the black clothes that covered her body, were sticking perfectly to her frame and were clearly displaying her dark brown limbs that could be interpreted as well-balanced.

Her age, is it in the latter half of her teens?

If one were to take a glance at her, then they'd probably be captivated by her body which had a resilience that was filled with youth, but if they were the eyes of a person who had experience with a blade to take a life, then they'd possibly grasp that her flesh which was filled with intentional femininity was being trained to fight.

The woman, was a warrior. To be precise, she was a person who was determined to steal a life in the darkness.

The moonlight illuminates the woman's face.

A skull is affixed to it.

From her ears to her chin, there was some beauty in the features that could be peeped at from her neck line, however, the areas concerning from the eyes to the nose were being concealed by the symbolic skull mask, making her precise face unable to be deduced.

The woman slowly walks forward.

As she walks towards the front of the magnificent water fountain that had taken its name from a

waterfall that flows down into Lake Ontario, in late at night Shinjuku Central Park, the woman humbly lowers her head.

**Manaka:** “Hihii. You needn't be so frightened.”

A voice rings out. It was a voice spun from the lips of a girl. In front of the woman, is a girl. Even though there shouldn't have been anyone there until just a second ago.....Indeed, the girl had appeared in a space where **no one was supposed to be there.**

With no sounds, and no indications.

As if, the heart of time had stopped, it was like she had **transitioned** here by ripping apart the body of space itself.

**Manaka:** “So, how was it? I think, you, were telling me about a relatively big matter.”

**Assassin:** “I was.”

**Manaka:** “So, do you have something that you wish to tell me?”

**Assassin:** “No, uh yes.”

**Manaka:** “Please tell me.”

**Assassin:** “Everything was a result of my weakness, my incompetence. There are no excuses for them.”

Without raising her head, the woman speaks these words to the girl.

She couldn't look at the girl's appearance, with her back turned to the water fountain and the moonlight overhead. But, it was a stance that could be easily understood enough as, “Someone like myself doesn't have the qualifications to do so.”

The woman was devoting her all to her absolute master. The neck she presents, was an embodiment of her desire to always offer her life to you, the young lady.

**Assassin:** “Please my lady, I want you to take my head, right now, in this spot.”

**Manaka:** “Hmmmm?”

**Assassin:** “Lady Manaka?”

**Manaka:** “It's fine, I knew it straight from the start. The “position” that Caster made for us is truly powerful. For going into the home of a Master that is.”

The girl weakly smiles.

**Manaka:** “It will be hard for you, right? Although, you're cute, breaking in through the front will probably be a bit difficult for you. Besides.....”

The girl continues her speech still smiling. Her weak smile, changes into a genuine one. She could guess the reason for it, but it was easy enough for the woman to understand.

After all, the words brought from the girl's lips as she started to say “Besides....,” was about the topic of her comforting Saber.

The woman was already aware *‘that her peace, her joy, and her amusement did not lie in myself, it*

*was just him who had it'.*

*'I must not be jealous.'*

The woman, just, tilts her ears to the words.

*'Even if I just hang onto her words like so, this, just being able to listen to her sound which resembles one composed by a heavenly messenger, honours me so much.'*

**Manaka:** “.....And then. I made him some scones. I think I baked them well, this time, and he ate a lot of them for me, but his thoughts to the taste were so cold and bland. “It’s delicious,” and “I like it,” he said, but that’s all he ever said. And although I’m happy, so happy, you see.....”

A female djinn wouldn’t be able to match the loveliness of her swelling cheeks.

**Manaka:** “I think it’s not a very good thing to call what he said, one-patterned. Of course, no matter what he says, I’ll be happy.”

**Assassin:** “Yes.”

**Manaka:** “Do you think that he and I will be together forever from now on?”

**Assassin:** “Yes.”

**Manaka:** “In that case, I think change will become our spice to keep us from never getting bored with each other for all eternity.”

I’m sure, the woman silently wishes that it could true for herself too.

*'If I open my mouth, then thoughts like this would flow out from it. The girl is spinning her thoughts from her lips without hesitation, it’s no more different than myself as I keep shutting my lips.'*

*'Essentially, there’s no change.*

*'No matter who my partner is, for example, I’ll play the act of a doll who doesn’t care about their partner. '*

*'Although, I’m just speaking about my own feelings. Even so—————'*

**Manaka:** “By the way, do you have enough prana?”

Suddenly, the girl asks. It’s as if she’s asking, whether the skinny dog with the emptied stomach, is hungry?

The woman, opens her lips. But, instead of words, she presents an item that she silently obtained.

It was lipstick.

A **deep red lipstick**, which had already been completely used up. (See Fragments 3 from the second drama cd)



They cannot exist without prana.  
In other words, they cannot exist without a Master.  
Although, as an exception there are----

Human souls.

It is possible to replenish their prana by "feeding" them with these.

Magi are not beings that can be bound by human morality.  
Thus, the "feeding" on souls is not necessarily forbidden.

However, if performed in excess then it can easily lead to the revelation of mysteries.

So, be careful.

(An extract from an old notebook)



**Manaka:** "You seem fine to me. heehee"

She accepts the lipstick.

The girl, passes a smile to the woman who serves her for now.

**Manaka:** "Amazing, you had a proper meal by yourself."

Along with a "*There, there,*" she **pats** the woman kindly with her white fingertips until they were fleeting. After removing her hood, she did it on her hair.....And her head.....

The woman's body trembled.

No, she was shivering.

It's not the cold night air.

It's not fear.

It's pleasure. Joy.

My deep emotions, were allowing her to touch me.

Her nails could easily touch, this, my whole body which could even be called a **Noble Phantasm** now, my whole body which was comprised of the "death" that's even in my sighs, body fluids and maybe even in my skin too.

*'Undying, undefeatable, a girl, who on the contrary isn't even in a state of agony.'*

Having been born fallen with the name of Manaka Sajyou, she is a creation-subjugating miracle in

itself.

*'If something like fate is possible in this world, then surely, I who had died in the distant past might've met her before I got such a temporary existence, I'm certain of it.'*

The woman was convinced of it.

*'The brilliant girl. Like the moonlight which floats disrupting the night which has promised absolute darkness to just one person. My master, my everything, is the **reliable partner** whom I was finally able to get for the first time.'*

The woman shivers.

*'Having personally decided to be my one and only Master, just being able to be touch by the girl's fingertips is.....'*

**Manaka:** "Amazing, amazing."

—————*Like this, I can only get a pat on the head.*

**Manaka:** "You're so amazing, you."

—————*It seethes. My entire body, is getting hotter.*

**Manaka:** "You're amazing and beautiful. In addition, you're very cute girl."

—————*The other day. No, since the night we met in Ikebukuro, I will always.....*

**Manaka:** "I expect much from you."

—————*I will always, submit myself to your radiance.*

**Manaka:** "So, please hang in there for a little bit longer. Assassin."

The girl smiles.

*As I bask in the starlight and the moonlight.....  
Her shine, her dazzle, stays with me—————*





The background of the page is a dark, textured surface with swirling, organic, and somewhat crystalline patterns in shades of black and dark grey. A prominent, thin, light-colored diagonal line runs from the upper right towards the lower left, intersecting the swirling patterns. The overall effect is abstract and moody.

# Little Lady ACT-5

## Act 5

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*A magus who has been loved by mysteries goes to play with their family*

—————*Drip, drip, drip.*

—————*Lots of drops of water are pouring down from the tilted watering can.*

The weight which I hold is quickly getting lighter.

The water permeates into the soil, down to the roots of the densely and thickly growing green Garden.

As she stares at her hands and the ground, Ayaka Sajyou breathes a little. Her white breath.

Although the sun was already rising right above her, the air was cold. Even the light of the sun which was shining in here from the nearby glass walls, didn't feel so warm to her.

As usual, watering the plants is carried out after my morning chores.

The time is a bit slow today.

I'm late today, too.

**Ayaka:** "My studies....."

My magic studies. I should probably do them.

'Yes,' she slightly thinks.

Even if I try to think about it, the answer won't come to me.

There are some things that I probably appear to have to do, either way it's studying. *'My magic studies, or my school studies?'*

Her Papa is always saying that both are important, so Ayaka vaguely took it to mean *'I probably should do it.'*

*'Obviously, I must study magic because it's our family lineage's magic.'*

*'Obviously, I must do my school studies because I'm a modern human.'*

*'Both are necessary.'*

*'Both are also a matter of course.'*

*'Even without a teacher—————'*

**Ayaka:** "....."

Taking a glimpse, I return my gaze to my surroundings.

Several pigeons are loitering around in a spot that's a slight distance from my feet. As their reserved chirps make cooing sounds rumble from their throats, they're peeping at my appearance.

*'My appearance. Peeping. Really?'*





It might be my imagination, but I have a hunch that the pigeons are anticipating something from my own words and actions.

**Ayaka:** “No good.”

I mumble in a small voice.

**Ayaka:** “I, already gave you some food.”

My reply is met with a couple of coos and motions.

As if they were saying “*I don’t care,*” or “*I didn’t even get anything,*” they tilt their necks.

“*Phew,*” Ayaka exhales. Despite having broken the rules and called out to them, I don’t even think that the response that’s sent back to me will be somewhat stupid as this. I guess I’ll be glad if I don’t have to call out to them.

**Ayaka:** “Good grief.”

I exhale a sigh not at the pigeons, but towards myself.

I carry the watering can which has gotten light enough to hold in one hand, vigilantly in both of my hands.

I won’t make that kind of mistake again.

Yesterday, when I was giving water to the flowers and the green trees that grow thickly in Garden, I was just absentmindedly carrying the watering can which got lighter the more its contents lessened, not noticing that the weight balance was shifting each time it did, my hands carelessly let go of it, and..... My entire body got soaked in cold water.

Moreover, not once, but thrice.

My premonition where I was feeling that perhaps, or rather———— it’s not one of my good points came true.

Certainly, I’m clumsy myself.

If I weren’t so, then yesterday would’ve passed unexpectedly casually.

That’s why, I won’t make that mistake again today.

Regardless of whether I’m clumsy or reckless, I must learn from my mistakes. I’ve always heard it as such, from Papa. I must be aware that my mistakes are a good opportunity to grow. I was probably told this countless times already. “Yes, countless times,” I nodded.

I won’t drop my guard. I’ll carry the watering can with both of my hands, and water it down to the last drop.

**Ayaka:** “Yep.”

Nodding, I return to the watering spot.

Deliberately ignoring, the gathering pigeons who had misjudged it as me having finished the watering.



After hanging the hose into the watering can's open mouth, I turn on the tap. A sound echoes, of the sound of flowing water running through the water pipe and pouring into the watering can.

There, they overlap with the pigeons' warbles.

Regardless of whether its firmly soundproofed, I can't hear the outside noises. Is it an automobile on the main street?

It's just, like I'm in the middle of a forest————

Despite not knowing how it is like a real forest, 'Yes,' I vaguely think.

It was because after a little while I realized, *'there's no water pipe or service in a forest.'*

**Ayaka:** "..... I wonder, if they're not here again today."

My grumbling voice.

It's small enough, to fully disappear into the sound of the water filling up the watering can.

**Ayaka:** "Papa."

I haven't seen him since this morning

Same as yesterday.

**Ayaka:** "Big Sister."

Big sister Manaka didn't even show her face for yesterday's breakfast.

This morning too.

**Ayaka:** "An important ritual, what is it?"

Being held in Tokyo here, is a large-scale magical ritual.

It is said to lead to the magi's greatest ambition.

Including the Sajyou family, all mages from past to present have wished, desired and continue to have reach out to this great item. In order to reach **it**, the ritual must be carried out. In the middle of the night of the day before yesterday, her Papa had said that much with a serious tone, to Ayaka who was nodding off with half-sleepy eyes.

As she mixes his **speeches**.

An important ritual.

Papa, as well as Big Sis, are participating in it.

When I asked, "*Should I also do something too?*" Papa shook his head.

*"You mustn't get involved with the ritual, but for a while, please take a break from school."*

As he said that————

**Ayaka:** "I wonder if I always be on break....."

Yesterday, today too.

I'm taking a break from elementary school for the second consecutive time.

I'm always, in the house.

Because I've been instructed to, "*Never leave the grounds.*"

Although no matter how much she inquired about the reason for it, like "*is the **combat situation** building up into a more chaotic state than first presumed?*" or "*did a Master leave?*" or "*Do we have to be careful of Assassin?*" or "*is there a knot already suspected in the Reiroukan manor?*" her Papa who was just muttering some **non-coherent speech** to himself, never did give a proper answer to Ayaka.

Although she thought it was strange, Ayaka, obediently obeyed her Papa with an "*okay.*"

It's not even, particularly, the first time that Ayaka had taken the day off from school.

There was the time when she was absent when she was completely bed-ridden with a fever, or the time when her chores had dragged on, or the number of times when she couldn't go to school as the barrier had been extended due to Ayaka's own poor skill. To that extent, I think that since Papa contacted my homeroom teacher last time, surely, I should do something similar and contact her too this time. Like when my daily chores dragged on, I could do it while concealing the magical part.

'*How did he contact her?*' I had a bit of interest, in that.

When I was absent with a real cold and fever, some classmates did come over bringing prints, together with some other people over for a visit, but nobody came when I was absent for my magic studies. And yet, when I went to the classroom the next day, my classmates would say something like "*You were absent, are you alright?*" The same things as when I was absent with a cold and fever.

Did he use some sort of magic, perhaps?

I wonder how he did it?

I, don't really know. I'd go ask him, but Papa isn't here.

He didn't show himself during my daily morning chore hours. Yesterday, as well as today too.

Although my morning breakfast was prepared in the refrigerator, a memo with "*Please heat and eat the frozen food in the microwave for lunch and dinner,*" written on it, was placed on top of the dining room table. It's exactly the same as yesterday.

I don't really like frozen food.

But, I like frozen gratin quite a bit.

But, I slightly hate it, when I have to eat it over and over again.

**Ayaka:** "If I ate it, for lunch....."

As if I'm talking to the pigeons beneath my feet, I talk to myself.

**Ayaka:** "What should I do, should I watch some TV....."

The puppet TV show program that's playing on the education channel is fun, and pleasant to watch every day.

But, I think it's just a bit lonely, when I can't see my classmates.

I also can't meet with Papa and Big Sis.

To be absent from school, for Papa and Big Sis to go far away for some reason, doesn't mean that I wasn't lonely up till now. Papa especially would often leave home for several days for **work**.

But, it was rare for them to overlap.

Taking a break from school, all by myself in a house with no one in it.

I always water Garden immediately after doing my daily chores, like this, so that he won't get angry about it even if I do have free time to spend until lunchtime.

Since I'm alone, nobody can say anything to me.

**Ayaka:** ".....The Holy Grail War."

While stopping the water that had overflowed from the watering can, I mutter, those few words.

"*The Holy Grail War*." They were, the words that I caught from Papa's speeches on that evening, the day before yesterday.

An important ritual.

The Magi's great ambition.

The Holy Grail War.

I don't know the details of it, and I don't understand it.

But, there was something that even Ayaka could sense in it, just a little.

About a few things—————

For example, Big Sister.

Big Sis Manaka.

She's way more sparkly than before, she's gotten prettier too.

For example, my Papa.

Father.

He's become different due to the changes in Big Sis, he's, become a bit **scared** of her.

Papa's speeches are somewhat—————

Even though I have never heard of it even once, until now.....



The Holy Grail War.

This is, a mutual slaughter.

Magi who have become Masters will normally decide to threaten your

life.

You must freely use your magical mysteries, and you must survive until the end by harnessing your Servant.

There are two conditions by which you can be **defeated** in the Holy Grail War.

A case where you have lost your life.

A case where you have lost your Servant.

Even if you can preserve your own life, if you lose your Servant then you will lose your right to obtain the Grail.

But, even if you have perhaps lost your Servant, don't let your guard down. You must seek protection from the "Overseer" who has been dispatched directly from the Holy Church, as the possibility is more than likely that you could be killed by the other Masters.

Protect your own life.

Protect your family lineage.

You mustn't stop your magic continue it uninterrupted.

You must use your **workshop** effectively.

If a workshop determines your style of magic, then it will become your assured protection even against Servants.

On the one hand, there's a move where you can pretend to have an ordinary and unchanging life.

However, if you're a Magus who possesses an external social network and you suddenly stay inside your own workshop, then there is also the risk that you could be surmised to be a Master who challenges the Holy Grail War.

But, if you approach the Holy Grail War half-heartedly.

Then there is also the possibility that you have already been grasped to have a shared lineage by your fellow Masters.

You must be simultaneously aware of your offense and defence.

And, protect your blood.

Your son. Your daughter.

Protect the people who will inherit your own lineage, inherit your magic circuits, and inherit your magic research.

If you feel it is necessary-----

Don't hesitate to use a decoy.

(An extract from an old notebook)



### The Western Part of the Tokyo Metropolitan Area, Inside Mt. Okutama.

Inside a clearing of trees that's far separated from the mountain path, a life or death struggle which couldn't be touched by anyone's eyes was unfolding. No, to be exact, that scenery was being reflected in the eyes of the birds dancing in the ashen sky.

A lone knight who is clad solely in blue and silver armour, slips through at the moment when the jaws of death rains down on him one by one, with an appearance of sometimes defending or clearing them away.

The knight who stood on the mountain slope————Saber was **intercepting** the swarm of death flying straight at him.

Countless steel approaches him to pierce through everything that's in their line of fire.

They are, arrows.

Like the invisible blade that he holds, it is a weapon which shouldn't really be used in the modern era.

One of the tools that humans employ to steal the lives of others who oppose them.

Drawing their bowstring to the limit, they fire their nocked arrows, piercing through the target who exists at a long range, and kills them.

There's, about 20 arrows per breath.

That wasn't a common skill. In other words, there's no doubt that the opponent who is carrying out this attack is not an ordinary person, he exists as a being that surpassed human wisdom the same as Saber. It probably not an exaggeration even to say that he's a fragment of the ultimate mystery. Generated by a Servant, it's a special move that must be admired as he's been using it even while killing the natural laws. Accompanied by an unimaginable speed and power, the released arrows **shave off** the inside of Mt. Okutama.

It drills a round hole into an able-bodied tree trunk.

Smashes the earth.

Crushes a lightly rained on boulder.

They are, multiple simultaneous shots. Roughly 20 of them.

By relying on the tiny reflections of light carried by the steel arrowheads, or just on the small sounds of wind cutting, Saber was facing each deadly arrow head on.

He dodges them with basic footwork, slices through the ones that can't be avoided with his invisible sword, and yet he repels the remaining arrows with his armour. One would probably express it as him exposing his armour. His silver armour which was woven with mana, if there's an especially thick portion of it, then it may be up to the task to protect him against the deadly arrows that were gouging the earth and smashing the trees.



*'Even with my sharp vision, I can't see Archer's figure.'*

Although it's easy to pinpoint his location from the direction of the fired arrows, it appeared to him that the shooter is apparently keeping up his shots while moving through the mountain at high speeds. With each group of fired shots, the attacking direction of the arrows are becoming distinct.

**Saber:** ".....Between him or Sir Tristan, I wonder which one of them would come out on top?"

Protecting himself against the countless shots, he lets out a brief breath.

One of the knights who once gathered at the Round Table.

He thinks for a bit, about that figure and name.

**That knight** who could freely operate a multitude of weapons naturally excelled with a bow too, *"The bow which hits the target"* which he demonstrated even in hunting spots, was literally none other than his special move.

If he confronted him with his skill of firing multiple arrows at once like this, then I wonder which bow would be superior at the end of it? As a knight who soared through the same **war scene as him**, it swells up my genuine curiosity, but it's not like this is a situation where I could spare thoughts about each of my regrets now. In the corner of his mind, he stops to meagrely think about the tiny extra bit further than that.

There in that battle, he focuses only on the battle.

Becoming a solitary fighting machine, he just brings victory onto the battlefield.

It is, himself.

That is what it means, to draw a sword.

**Manaka:** *"If you feel like it's getting dangerous, escape, immediately."*

Manaka's words from a moment ago.

Saber remembers them precisely.

**Manaka:** *"You, just, have to draw out Archer for me."*

It was just before he set foot into the mountain.

The girl who was his Master, said that to him, whilst frowning her expression.

Moistening her blue eyes which were transparent like a jewel, a sad colour was expressed on her beautiful features.

Her first words of *"Take care not to get hurt"* were towards the one whom she could not protect, as the girl, appeared to have been deeply worried about him.

But, that mattered not to Saber.

Rather, one could say t'was his specialty.

For a Servant, must proceed to the place of exchanging lives as their Master's blade.

Truly he was like a knight running through the battlefield for the sake of his Master.

In that case, the girl's words this time.

*I want to draw him out————*

Indeed, he would certainly accept his Master's orders.  
He'll try to draw him out.

For example, with hundreds————no, thousands, no, millions, of arrows incessantly pouring down on him, he just tries to stick it out.

He preps his sword. One handed. If there was a blade that he could wield not to bisect his approaching enemy, but to knock down the arrows flying at him with, then one-handed, is a fitting pose to carry his sword only in his right hand with.

To prepare for any unforeseen circumstances, he should probably keep his left hand free.  
Stopping in a spot on the mountain slope, he continues to get further fired on.  
The flock of steel arrows attacks him for a few seconds straight.

He safely dodges and repels them.

Just when he felt like his body had gotten used to the dodging and defence, suddenly, the arrows broke off. Even after a few seconds passed, the arrows didn't come to do him in. *'Is he giving up on an opponent who could bring him down at this current distance?' 'No. It's probably not that.' The Servant's peculiar presence is unsteadily being pronounced in the mountain even now.'*  
*'I'll vigilantly lie in wait, without demolishing my stance.'*

And then————

The sky, was dyed black.

It's not like, black rainclouds had appeared all of a sudden.

Though, it was enough to exhaustively fill up the sky with————

A surging wave of arrows?

A torrent of death?

A heavy rain of steel?

**Saber:** “————How interesting.”

Prepping his invisible blade again in **both hands**.  
Saber mumbles a little.



I can see a lone girl.

I can say that she is adorable, and, possibly beautiful too.

*'Lovely.'* I think a word like that suits her.

That girl was walking in the mountain.

All by herself.

She's not even doing anything, in particular.  
When she finds a butterfly, she tries holding it on her finger and smiles.

**Manaka:** “.....♪”

She's singing and humming a tune.  
Is she a **normal person** who came for a picnic?  
But, in this cold season, where it's so cold that my exhaled breath is turning white?  
I know, there's no kind of evaluation criteria for an enemy Magus, like their outer appearance etc.  
But, the fact that she's just, “*a girl*,” aches somewhere in “my” heart.

Furthermore, more than anything.....  
The girl's expression, the tune she hums.

Gentle, and beautiful.

I can feel too much of her genuine purity.  
Is this child who embodied that much loveliness, possibly a participant in the **mutual slaughter**?  
The Holy Grail War, and the rest of it————

**Manaka:** “I found you.”

She can see me!  
The girl, is definitely looking over **here at me**.  
A few ‘*No Ways!*’ rise up in my mind.  
Could she be, a Master? That girl?  
No way, has she broken through my remote viewing magic at this distance?  
No way, has she been searching for me?

**Manaka:** “You're Archer's Master, right? Thank you.”

I can read, the words coming from her moving lips.  
This girl is a Master, that's first without a doubt.  
I must evacuate immediately.  
If she has enough talent to notice me at this distance, then it's probably easy for her to detect my whereabouts.

But, I couldn't move.

Not my lips. My legs. I can't even move my eyelids.  
I can't move my body.  
Is it utterly beyond stupid, for me to ask “Why?” ————

**Manaka:** “Thank you.”

Her words spin again, from her cherry-blossom coloured lips.

*“Thank you.”*

Why, is this girl thanking me?

She’s speaking them to me. That much is certain.  
But, I can’t understand the meaning behind her words.

*“Thank you.”*

For, what?

**Manaka:** ““You know, although I’m glad that you let me have a picnic with him…….”

Him————

Is she talking about her Servant?  
A picnic? What is, she talking about?

**Manaka:** “But…….”

The girl’s expression, darkens.  
In a sudden transformation, the face of loveliness itself colours itself with sadness.

**Manaka:** “You, made him expose himself to danger.”

In the inside of her eyes————

**Manaka:** “So, what will you do about it?”

I can see something————







**Hiroki Sajyou:** “Ayaka. Are you in here?”

The time had right passed 2 pm.

Slowly, while thinking, *‘my skills sure aren’t all that great even for myself,’* I open the same frozen gratin seal as I did for yesterday’s lunch and dinner, place it on a heat-resistant plate, and when I was staring at the microwave oven wondering how the oven functions work for the third time.....

Papa appeared in the kitchen.

As I look at Papa who reflects my gaze, I, am completely gobsmacked.

Is it because I was thinking that no-one was at home? Or, did he come back home from the outside when I wasn’t looking? If that’s the case, then is Big Sis here too? Moreover, I think **someone** must be in one of the rooms that I mustn’t enter————

**Hiroki Sajyou:** “Manaka isn’t here. I’ll be leaving soon, too.”

**Ayaka:** “I see.....”

*‘In that case, I should probably prepare two Gratins.’*

As she thinks that, Ayaka nods.

**Hiroki Sajyou:** “Are you doing your studies?”

Papa’s words.

I don’t know which studies he’s talking about.

Is he talking about my school studies? Or my magic studies?

*“I’m doing them,”* I vaguely return the words.

I’m doing the former. I just, have the feeling that I haven’t done the latter properly. After all, Papa doesn’t show his face during my daily morning chores. I can’t tell if I’m doing it right just by myself. I can only understand it, when it’s proper.

**Ayaka:** *(Have I been busted?)*

He has pointed out the lie mixed into my words. Despite thinking that, *‘I am.’*

**Hiroki Sajyou:** “Is that so?”

I just nod, briefly to that.

Papa didn’t come out and say anything.

**Hiroki Sajyou:** “You’re very late, for lunch.”

**Ayaka:** “Yes.”

**Hiroki Sajyou:** “Did you follow the memo that said to *“please eat it properly?”*”

**Ayaka:** “I’m sorry. I forgot.....to eat it.....”

I spit out lies even here.

To tell the truth, I was waiting for Papa or Big Sis to come home.

Because, even if I heat and eat the frozen food, by myself, it's not gonna be even a little delicious.

After all, when I become much bigger, I can do more at home, I'll be able to cook, but then would I be able them deliciously eat them even when I'm alone?

**Hiroki Sajyou:** "Will you please set the table?"

**Ayaka:** "Sure."

**Hiroki Sajyou:** "You should respond with a "Yes." Ayaka"

**Ayaka:** "Y, yes."

As he's still talking, I enter the dining room by myself. I wipe down the table with a wet dish cloth and take out the forks from the cupboard. Since I had no idea about him, I tentatively, take out enough cutlery for two. I take out two cups and pour milk into them too.

As I did a bit of it, I can hear the sound of a chime, "*ping*," coming from the kitchen.

Papa, came in carrying in two gratins that were placed onto plates.

**Ayaka:** (Ah, we're gonna it eat together!)

Papa, and myself. We're gonna eat frozen gratin together.

If we eat it together, then the taste of it—————

Won't, particularly change much.

It'll be the same as yesterday's lunch and dinner, frozen food.

**Ayaka:** "What about Big Sis?"

I eat, a bit of it. And drink the milk.

Although I gently asked about it, with a small voice, there's no response. The dining room is still quiet.

As I raise my gaze from my gratin, Papa was making a **strange face**.

Affixed with an expression that he didn't always show on his face, Papa, is staring straight at me.

**Ayaka:** "Papa?"

What is it, I wonder?

I've never seen this kind of face, on Papa.

In his eyes, there's something, a strange feeling like it's someone else. His expression. His face. His eyes.

I feel something, **shivering** down along my spine. It's really similar to what I felt when I saw Big Sis's smiling face, a couple of days ago.

It feels so terribly, cold. Chilly.

**Hiroki Sajyou:** "Manaka....." Papa started to say something, after closing his mouth once.

**Hiroki Sajyou:** "The ritual, will be held over a very important period of time. So, take care to never get close to the back room, and I shouldn't have to hear you calling out to us from there."

**Ayaka:** "Right."

In this room————like I thought, there's someone here.  
Ayaka nods while consenting to it a little.

In one of the rooms that I mustn't enter, there's definitely **someone** in the back room, which means, that I did somehow notice them after all. Although I didn't realize it at first, a few days ago in the middle of the night, when I was walking in the hallway trying to go to the toilet, I had this feeling that I saw a shadow of a person.

The shadow's physique, was different than Papa or Big Sis's.  
I hadn't thought, '*Hii, a burglar.*' I thought that he didn't seem to be, that bad, of a person.

**Ayaka:** (I wonder if it's someone who has a relation, to this, "Holy Grail War" thing. A guest maybe?)

I wanted to ask a question.  
Who is that person?

Why, are they in the back room?  
Are Papa and Big Sis, meeting with that person?  
I wanted to say it. I want to ask him. But, I can't say it.  
On Papa's face, there's still, traces of an expression that I've never seen before.

**I'm too scared** and I can't ask him————

**Ayaka:** "Is Big Sis, okay?"

Muttering a few words, the words spill out from my lips.  
They're not the words that naturally came out from my lips, I was trying to say something, and those words were squeezed out.  
I want to scrape the traces of that something which is still clinging to Papa's face off.  
As I pretend to return my gaze to my gratin, I examine Papa's appearance.

His expression.  
The emotions in his eyes.  
There's a strange, helpless feeling in them.

**Hiroki Sajyou:** "She is.....I guess. No, no, there's no problem with Manaka. I can't even spot one problem for when we do the ritual to achieve our great ambition, so don't you worry about her."

**Ayaka:** "I, is that so?"

**Hiroki Sajyou:** "There's no prob....."

He's trying to say, something. It's almost like————  
However. He couldn't continue his words. At least, to Ayaka.

**Hiroki Sajyou:** "Problem? There's, no such problem. It's almost going too well. Everything is going so swimmingly well for us that even the Holy Church is starting to have doubts. It's the same for me too. Why, why can "*that*" do practically anything? I know "*that*" has natural talent for it,

but is that perhaps loved by magic? Loved by mysteries? But, even so, to hold such regards for “*that*” Servant while he’s in a human body..... Already, “*that*” even acts like it knows the location of the Greater Grail. So why? When and how did “*that*” obtain the knowledge of it? I didn’t tell “*that*” about it, so for “*that*” to easily make, even lots of the secret rituals that doesn’t exist in the Sajyou lineage her belonging is.....”

What is he saying, I have no clue what he’s talking about?

It was, Papa’s internal monologue.

I didn’t want to hear it.

Ignoring the me who is right in front of him, the figure of Papa who is muttering and grumbling something, is very.....

—————was, very weird after all.



About my Papa, I love him.

I love him.

I also thought that, Papa, surely loves me too.

Yeah.

I think that, even now.

Even now, I love that about Papa.

I just think that’s ‘*it’s a bit, scary.*’

Just that.

Yeah, just that.

So, I wait until he returns to normal for me.

Stop talking to yourself, turn back into regular old Papa again.

Even though it should’ve been the same thing I ate yesterday, for some reason, the gratin had no flavour.

It’s a squishy squishy, rubbery like gratin.

When I finish eating it.

Finally, Papa was making his usual face.

Papa, who is quiet, serious, and a bit stern to me.

**Ayaka:** “I’ll do the cleaning-up. So, Papa you go to work.....”

**Hiroki Sajyou:** “No, that can wait till later.”

Papa, with his usual face.

With a quiet voice, he says.....

**Hiroki Sajyou:** “Let’s go to Garden. I have something I need to tell you, Ayaka”

What is it?

I, tilt my neck, and tried to ask, “Why?”

Papa took my hand, and we leave the dining room.

We walk together in the hallway.

Huh. Huh?

It’s very strange, to be holding Papa’s hand, like this. I have a feeling that I’ve taken it like that before when I was at much much younger age, but at least, I think it’s not a memory from when I moved up to Elementary School.

We open the door in front of us where I’ve walked through much of the house’s corridor, and we leave for the outside.

We proceed through the passage, open the end glass door, and finally we arrive at it.

Garden.

Where I spent most of my morning hours in, our garden.

Surrounded by glass walls and ceilings, it’s a place of green trees and flowers.

I do my daily morning chores here, and, it’s my study spot.

**Hiroki Sajyou:** “Nobody can destroy this spell formula. In the worst-case scenario, please take refuge in here.”

**Ayaka:** “The worst-case?”

**Hiroki Sajyou:** “The meaning of it is exactly as it sounds. Even if you do pay careful attention, a critical situation may break out.”

**Ayaka:** “Huh?”

I don’t, really understand it.

I try to look up at Papa’s face.

It’s the same as his words. Papa’s expressions, I don’t understand them really well.

Although the sky was getting cloudy, it’s still bright, but I couldn’t see Papa’s face because of the light coming in from the glass ceiling behind him.

**Hiroki Sajyou:** “I didn’t want to tell you this, but everything here, was made by your mother.”

**Ayaka:** “I, see.”

I did have that kind of feeling. That it wasn’t my Papa who made it, I mean.

**Hiroki Sajyou:** “It’s true. **She made it for you.....**”

**Ayaka:** “Eh.....”

My neck, I completely tilt it.

This place————

Since, I thought that Garden was a place to do magic studies in.

It’s for the sake of the Sajyou family magics.

So, naturally, it is for, the person who will inherit the house, for Big Sis.



**Ayaka:** “But, Big Sis.....?”

**Hiroki Sajyou:** “Manaka probably won’t need this place. Your mother, definitely understood that too.”

Mother too?

He says, “She understood,” what?

**Hiroki Sajyou:** “So, Ayaka.....”

Papa, touches my shoulder.

**Hiroki Sajyou:** “This belongs to you.”

Only a bit, more strongly. Papa holds me.

**Hiroki Sajyou:** “It’s, just yours.....”

And then—————

Papa told me, some words.

About Garden.

About Mum.

And after that, **about myself.**

Although I nodded over and over again saying, “Yes,” I didn’t really understand the words being said to me.

But, even so.....

I, understood them.

Papa, my Papa who had become a bit scared, but—————

In truth nothing really did change.

Surely, it’ll be soon.

Once the important ritual ends, then he’ll definitely make sure to return to normal, right?





---

**Archer:** “A fired arrow won’t return ever again. Though if you nock the arrow onto a bow, draw it to its limit and fire it, it’ll be able to backtrack somewhat.”

Archer says.  
To his Master who is repeatedly sobbing even now.

---

**Berserker:** “Arrrrrrruuggggghhhhhh———!!”

Berserker howls to the moon floating in the sky.  
In the middle of a sturdy magical garden that’s like a fortress.

---

**Lancer:** “Thou art a kind person. An honest person. You who doth adorn yourself in silver armour. Even as I pierce your life with my lance, you probably will not change.”

Lancer mumbles.  
While scorching her body in the flames that blaze from within her.

---

**Assassin:** “My Master. Everything, everything, I do is for your sake.....”

Assassin whispers.  
While repeating her deadly dance again, tonight.

---

**Rider:** “Ha-ha! Flee, run, fly away! Struggle to the best of your ability. Scream. Shout! Either way, the fate of all three of you mongrels, is to burn and vanish by my light!”

The **king** sonorously cries.  
As he sits on his ship floating in the night sky, he burns the surface with a scorching heat that is like the sun.

Releasing an arrow.  
The war, has already begun.

The Greater Holy Grail.  
A wish granting device that continues to operate mercilessly.  
As many tragedies revolve around it.

———The promised time is near.  
———The Holy Grail War, will increase in violence, infringing itself upon the Tokyo night.

The background of the page is a dark, textured surface with swirling, organic, and somewhat crystalline patterns in shades of black and dark grey. A thin, light-colored diagonal line runs from the upper right towards the lower left, intersecting the swirling patterns.

# Little Lady ACT-6

## Act 6

---

*The person beyond the smile is*

It is, a memory.

A memory of the morning when I last saw that person's figure.

**Manaka:** "Well then, I'm off."

As she said it, Big Sis was trying to go out without carrying anything.

There's already no sign of Papa. Although she didn't exactly understand it, Ayaka Sajyou faintly thinks, '*She's definitely not coming back home after last night.*' There were just too many secrets about the **ritual** that her father and big sister were said to be participating in, that the young Ayaka just didn't know about.

It was unavoidable.

After all, I'm different from Big Sis.

My special big sister.

My beautiful big sister.

My big sister ———Manaka Sajyou.

Just by walking through the corridor and walking the distance to the front entrance like this, right, everything about her is different.

The morning sun which shines in through the window, glitters, as its radiance sprinkles over Big Sis' whole body. It's as if she's **something** more precious than that, like a fairy or princess from a fairy tale. Even among the picture books which my father had read to me only a few times just before going up to elementary school, there was never a person who shines as much as this, there wasn't even one among the foreign animation films that I had watched several times by myself.

She's just too different, from me.

Am I, ordinary?

Or a mediocre person, maybe?

'*Such words suit me,*' Ayaka thinks.

Right, it's the word that I had just learned in my elementary school's Japanese Language Class. *Ordinary*. Despite it being a word that I should've already known ——— having listened to the explanation from the teacher's mouth and having watched the sentence being written on the blackboard in white chalk, '*Aah, I see, so that's how it is,*' I had thought.

'*The two characters written by teacher's hand, they're probably definitely about me.*'

———*My Big Sis who can master anything.*

———*Even one of the black magics, that I myself is far from mastering.*

At around the age of eight, the same as myself, Big Sis was said to have perfectly mastered two



types of our family line's sorcery without even a little bit of help. Ayaka who had listened to that story while her eyes were lighting up, unintentionally let slipped, *"I wonder if I'm able to do that too?"* out of her mouth.

Was it about last year, or a little before that?

Papa then quietly shook his head, and said, *"it's because she's special, please you are only to think of mastering the Sajyou's black magic."*

At first, I thought, *'Perhaps it might be because I'm a bad girl.'*

I was depressed as soon as I thought that, I was sad, miserable, I couldn't sleep, I also lost my sense of time, I was even more than 20 minutes late time-wise to go out for my daily morning chores.

However, I immediately realized that it's not the case. I completely realized it.

According to his words, Big Sis is just **special** ——

At the same time, I, myself, was no more than a child from a very ordinary and average Magus family lineage.

*"To master the magic of one's family line,"* is simple to say in words. But actually, by properly inheriting a family line's magic circuits which have been engraved into our blood, one can learn an entire lifetime's worth of knowledge, study it, and somehow is a good place to be able to master one's lineage.

That is normal. That is, my average style of black magic.

———*Even if I think that I want to be.....*

———*Just like my big sister, I.....*

*Cannot become her.*

That is, probably because I've already decided that it's hopeless.

It's somehow better to think that way.

So, I won't think it this morning either.

My so much prettier big sister, is a radiant person.

Even as I witness the brilliant soul of the one called Manaka Sajyou who is proceeding down the hallway while twirling around and around, while basking in the shining sunlight, I won't think *'if I became like this,'* or *'I want to be a wonderful woman,'* I won't think about such things. I, absolutely won't think them. I can't think like that.

I'll only just look.

Like looking at the birds dancing in the sky, or the bugs crawling on the earth.

Like the many Magi, who yearn for the root of all creation.

**Ayaka:** "Manaka, Big Sis....."

Sighing, I mumble her name.

Already, the huge door to the foyer appeared before my eyes.

If I pass through here, Big Sis will tell me that she won't be coming back home for a while.

A while ago, I was smoothly told that when the two of us were alone at breakfast time, at that time I hadn't said any words besides "*Is that true?*" but in front of the foyer door, aah, '*Soon I really will be all **alone**,*' I thought———

Naturally I opened my lips.

My voice. The words, however small slipped out.

**Ayaka:** "Big Sis, are you going now....."

**Manaka:** "Hee-hee. Whaaat is it?"

Spinning, Big Sis turns around to me.

As she turns her back to the huge wooden front door of the Sajyou house. That figure, in some respects, also appears similar to Alice from the fairy tale, where she took a journey into a Wonderland that was filled with strange and miraculous things.

"Tilt your head," Big Sis said.

A pretty sound like the ringing of a bell. Her voice.

**Manaka:** "Geez Ayaka, you're already an elementary school student. And yet, I wonder if you're lonely by yourself?"

**Ayaka:** ".....I'm not lonely"

**Manaka:** "Do you hate liars?"

**Ayaka:** "I'm lonely."

With a much smaller voice, I look down.

**Manaka:** "HaHa. That's great. Great. That's right, you mustn't lie."

Have I maybe told a lie before?

But, I think I'm definitely lonely. What I'm feeling is real.

I'm lonely. It's lonely, being alone in a huge house.

Especially, when there aren't so many times when the two of us are together even when Big Sis stays at home, before this magic ritual———the Holy Grail War began, I felt that it wasn't necessarily enough for me to just face her even at meal times.

Even so, I think I'm lonely.

The someone somewhere in my house, my big sister is here, my father is here. If I'm alone without meeting anyone on top of that, then when I'm really alone with nobody here, I see, I have a feeling that it'll be different.

How should I put it?

As she looked up at her Big Sister, Ayaka went completely silent.

Even if I'm lonely, I can't say, "*Stay here with me,*" can I?

I wouldn't allow it to begin with. For my Big Sis who is going out to do an important ritual, I'll restrain myself, somewhat.

**Manaka:** "I'm happy that you're **bearing** it for me, Ayaka. There, there"

Big Sis' hand reaches out, touching Ayaka's head.

**Manaka:** "You're great, great"

As she says it, she strokes my hair.

Despite thinking that it's a first for her to be doing something like that, why, do I feel a familiar presence in the way that Sis is using her hands, suddenly, my neck tilts.

I wonder why?

**Manaka:** "But, I cannot. I have to go now. To the Greater Grail. For **that person's** sake."

Big Sis, shows a smile———

**Manaka:** "I wonder if the day might come when you'll understand too."

———Sparkling, she glitters.

**Manaka:** "Doing something for the sake of somebody else, I mean. Is it about longing for someone?"

———See. She's like a princess.

**Manaka:** "Or is it about, being in love with them?"

———Big Sis who is saying that, is more prettier, than anything, or anyone too.

**Manaka:** "In that moment, the world will, for the first time, start revolving even centering around me."

To long for someone. Love.

*'Certainly, it's a beautiful word,'* I think.

With a voice which uttered so much from dazzling Big Sis' lips, her words, were shining more intensely than the radiance of the sun flowing in through the window, with an "*Aah, it's wonderful,*" Ayaka was overwhelmed by them. It's just that, her words, and the radiance brought from her smile is so overwhelming, that I can't possibly consider nor think of anything else.

To fall in love, she said. Love.

The thing is, even if I know it as a word, I haven't actually felt it before.

So.....

**Manaka:** "I mean he is my fated partner after all."

———While I was listening, to her pretty voice.

**Manaka:** “He, really exists. Ayaka.”

—————My eyes. I fully avert them.

**Manaka:** “Anything.... even your life, not even caring if you sacrifice it. A partner who seems to be like that.”

———I can’t stand Big Sis’ radiance anymore.

**Manaka:** “He exists. I’m, already, with him.”

Sparkling, Big Sis tells me this while wearing a glow.

Normally I was supposed to be captivated by it.

However, for some reason, why do I have this indescribable grey haze swirling around in my chest?

Why, am I the one averting my eyes? It's because, the entirety of Big Sis who shines so much is way too dazzling.

Or, have I been feeling something else?

Ayaka didn’t understand it.

Why, **why am I feeling so anxious**, in front of this person who is radiating so much?

Her life? Sacrifice it? Yes, spoken from this person’s mouth?

**Ayaka:** “Big Sis.”

———Looking down. The words leak out.

**Ayaka:** “You won’t die, will you?”

———Still with my eyes cast down.

**Ayaka:** “You better come back, okay, to our house, make sure you come back, alright.”

———Like a prayer, it’s a request, to my Big Sis.

**Ayaka:** “.....We’ll meet again, right”

“*Drip, drip,*” tears are falling as I tell her these words.

Without raising my head while still unaware that this is the last moment between us, without facing her gaze properly.

That’s why, Ayaka didn’t realise it.

That in her next words.

More precisely, in that small instance when Manaka Sajyou replies back to her words, in that tiny moment, what on earth had happened?

The **glimpse** of her which she had believed to have seen till now, at that moment, was accompanied by a clear **figure**, but to Ayaka it was right there.

She didn't notice———

**Manaka:** “No. I think it's better for you, if we don't meet.”

———The pretty echo, the sound..... Of her voice.

**Manaka:** “But, you're right.”

———A voice clad in mystery.

**Manaka:** “If you're that attached to me.....”

———Gently, reaches me as if I'm being hugged, by Big Sis' words.

**Manaka:** “Then if I feel like it, I'll even **make use** of you too.”

As Big Sis tells me this, what kind of face was she making?

As Big Sis said it to me, with what eyes was she looking at me with?

Until the end.

Ayaka Sajyou hadn't realised it.

At least, on this day, morning, and time.....

**I hadn't realized it.**







*The Holy Grail War.  
It's about the end of it.*

*The Holy Grail activates by burning the lives of seven Servants.  
On top of the structure, only one Master can become the victor, an  
outcome in another form is something that you couldn't originally  
get.*

*But if you disregard the outcome of it, then a different form of  
conclusion is also possible.*

*In other words, a case where all of the Masters are either  
defeated in the Holy Grail War or have chosen to resign their  
right to participate.*

*We magi who seek the root of all creation, have a very low  
likelihood of requesting a personal abstention during this Holy  
Grail War which is the greatest of opportunities for us, but I  
will speak only of that possibility here.*

*Being defeated---*

*In lots of cases, it is likely accompanied by the death of a  
Magus.*

*As described in a separate heading.*

*The waiver of rights.*

*This, is established by announcing it to the Overseer that's  
dispatched from the Holy Church.*

*As described in a separate heading.*

*The result is either an elimination or a waiver of their rights.  
If by chance, there's a case where the number of Masters become  
zero.*

*Then this is greeted with a conclusion called "no victor."  
Without our great ambition being fulfilled, we will wait for our  
next opportunity.*

*But---*

*(An extract from an old notebook)*



**It is, a memory.**

**A memory of myself from 8 years ago, when I saw that person's figure for the last time.**

The last———?

No, that's wrong.

That was only a temporary parting.

Because the real **last time** came soon after that.

I can't remember it all except for in fragments now, but there is one memory that I don't want to remember.

An important magic ritual. The mutual slaughter of 8 years ago.

Performed through the joined hands of the Mage's Association and the Holy Church, the very first Holy Grail War.

My memory is vague, sometimes, yes, so these scraps of the last time might also be a good place to start.

Although, I believe I have recalled it to someone before.

See, even I can arbitrarily fully recall it like this.

Falling asleep, I dream.

Oh, I wish, that I didn't have to see such dreams.

Though, such a meagre wish of mine will not be granted.

For the merciless Hypnos, is forcibly showing these memory fragments to me like this.

The first one is of my memory of that early morning, 8 years ago.

My farewell with that person.

The last one is of my memory of their demise, 8 years ago.

It is the real one, the real moment of Manaka Big Sis' and my parting.

———In the dark, dark, deep underground of Tokyo.

In a three-dimensional magic circle.

Something black, is drifting in the **Greater Grail**.

Standing in a line are sacrifices.

A countless number of girls, falling in order.

Ordinary, plain, lives that are just going to being consumed. A life. A life.

Someone's laughing voice.

Someone———

That's probably, right, that's, **I think** that's my father's laughing voice.

???: "Everyone is waiting for their turn so peacefully, but Ayaka is special."

Someone said.

???: "Fall right now, become my ingredients."

I know, that someone's voice.

???: "After all, ordinary people only have enough useful value for that."

That's definitely Papa's voice.

**Hiroki Sajyou:** "———What the hell do you mean!?"

The voice of my Papa shouting. I hate it, stop it, Papa.

**Hiroki Sajyou:** "This average, mediocre, ordinary person.....!"

Stop it! Why? Why are you saying, those things?

**Hiroki Sajyou:** "I was mistaken to have chosen you."

Why, why are you shouting like that!?

Papa!

Let go of me! It hurts! I hate it! I hate it!

Am I, going to fall too? Over there?

And then, my consciousness spins and blacks out together with my despair.

Spinning———

———A lump of meat.

———A scream.

———Red.

I didn't **see anything**.

What I noticed, was after I felt something had covered my face.

Right, I, open my closed eyelids.

And then, I saw it.

I'd seen it.

Big Sis, as if she's shielding me———

Like she's even protecting me, is standing dead still.

**Ayaka:** "Big Sis."

Could I.....have said something, at that time?

I might not have been able to say it.

Because, I realised what the thing covering my face was.

Blood———

Covering my face, is Big Sis' blood.

My older sister who stood right there in front of my eyes.

A pretty person. You, who shined more than anyone, like a princess.

Something, something is bulging from her chest.

That, that thing pierced through the pretty black feather pattern on her chest, is a golden blade.

She's been pierced by **someone's sword** from behind, Manaka Big Sis.

In other words, what's covering my face is, aah aah———

Big Sis'———



The light of the dazzling sun, shines in through the gap of the closed curtains.

The voices of songbirds tell the time, while perching on the branches of the trees right beyond the window.

Signs of the morning.

The coldness and darkness of the night disappears off to somewhere like a lie, the day which should've been "tomorrow" until right before I go to sleep, comes along and becomes the form of "today."

**Ayaka:** "..... nnhh."

While rubbing her heavy eyelids, in her soft bed, Ayaka Sajyou wakes up.

Waking up was the worst.

Why, because she had a cruel dream.

Although the contents of it are fragmentary and she doesn't really remember them, she only knows that the memory of that moment, 8 years ago, appeared to her as dreams.

**Ayaka:** (It's, morning)

While mumbling it in her mind, she stretches out her hand to the digital alarm clock that was placed on her bedside. As her right hand came out from the blanket, a chilly air touches it.

'This feeling is in my group of favorite things.'

Yes, even the comfortable feeling of her bed which regulated her own body temperature, or even the light of the morning sun, she likes them just the same as those songbirds' voices.

Even so, cold things are cold.

Although she is driven by the temptation to want to curl her entire body up in her blanket and fall asleep again, she somehow endures it.

She brings the digital alarm clock closer to her eyes. Although the part about normally spending her everyday life even without glasses didn't trouble her very much, with eyes which had become worsened as they were in these eight years, it was hard for her to see the items on hand without wearing glasses. After all she is near-sighted.

【1999】

After turning a fleeting gaze towards the western calendar display like always, she checks the time.

【AM 5:59】

5:59 AM.

It is not a particularly uncommon time for her classmates who have morning club practice for instance. However, Ayaka didn't belong to any club, so this time is definitely the time when she must get out of bed.

**Ayaka:** "Perfect, ugh."

As she mumbles it, she turns the alarm switch off.

The time that the alarm was setup for is 6:00 AM.

So, "*perfect.*" She had to quickly get out of bed.

Wriggling and crawling out from her blanket, she squirms to take off her pyjamas.

She then puts on her high school uniform which she had laid out before she went to sleep last night, puts on her glasses which she had left on the top of her desk, and then combs her hair in front of the full-length mirror that was beside her wardrobe. Since her hair is not really that long, she finishes it right away. It's okay. At least, it didn't affect her breakfast time.

Her breath is white.

The air in the corridor, was even more colder than the inside of her room.

Walking to the bathroom at a fast pace, she washes her face with water that was so cold that the air didn't bother her at all.

Naturally, she fixes her fringe in place with a pin so that it doesn't get wet.

**Ayaka:** "Hya!"

It's cold. Surprised, she lets out a cry.

Although she was thinking, '*I've clearly woken up by myself,*' the hints of sleep that were apparently still left somewhere on her vanishes in that moment. Her consciousness, is clear. Wiping the moisture off her face with her personal towel, she removes the fringe pin, as she puts on and adjusts her glasses———

Suddenly, it catches her eyes. The small stepladder which she cannot use now.

**Ayaka:** "I should throw it away, next time."

After muttering it and sighing, she looks at the mirror.

Naturally. Her own appearance, was reflected in there.

She didn't even wet her bangs, so it's her 16-year-old self.

She didn't resemble **that person**, very much. But if she's forced to say it, then———



**Ayaka:** “What an ordinary face.”

The words were naturally spilling out.

A girl who wore glasses. A girl, who didn't stand out or seem to fit in anywhere, is in there. She might not solely resemble that person, or even have her clear eyes which should shine by catching the light, but they didn't attractively shine through the lens of her glasses. 'Yes,' Ayaka thought.

It was a face that couldn't be said to be in, her group of favorite things.

Before her own reflection in the mirror, she wondered why the expression in her eyes were so full of caution.

It might be oozing out of her character.

Her own personality.

*'In other words, I'm gloomy, cowardly, narrow-minded, and.....'*

**Ayaka:** “.....Huh. crap, the time, the time.”

‘———So hopelessly.....’

‘.....Ordinary.’

Rushing, she walks through the corridor and opens the door to the dining room, passing through it to go to the kitchen.

Although he says that doesn't mind the *'person on duty system'* for cooking, she wanted to make it by herself as much as possible, after the unbelievable amount that he made the last time she entrusted him with it. Although she didn't particularly mind having to eat lots of food, it would be bothersome to naturally come up with something if she has to eat the same amount of food as him.

Fetching some vegetables from the refrigerator with her fingers which still had the bandage from yesterday wound around it, she grasps the kitchen knife, and begins with the tomatoes.

With a tap-tap, she starts cutting them up.

Just cutting the vegetables, she thinks *'I've gotten a lot more skilled at it compared to when I was a child.'*

It was after elementary school when she had noticed, that even one style of cutting changes the texture of the food, directly connecting it to taste. To that end, she couldn't really puff her chest at it.

Despite being able to prepare mainly vegetables, it had taken a considerable amount of time for her to realize it.

**Ayaka:** “I'm really am ordinary, aren't I?”

**Saber:** “Good Morning, Ayaka. It appears you're early again this morning.”

Suddenly, a voice ——

Despite not wanting to be surprised at this moment, “*Wah!*” she cried. She was surprised.

As she turns her gaze, he, appeared there.

———*He who had blue eyes, that appear green with the addition of light.*

———*My, Servant.*

**Ayaka:** “Geez. Don’t scare me like that, Saber”

**Saber:** “I’m sorry, Ayaka. I didn’t mean to surprise you, but you were concentrating.”

**Ayaka:** “I’m just cutting vegetables.”

**Saber:** “I can see that. But still, you’re very skilled at handling kitchen knives.”

He smiles as he says it.

It was his usual, smiling face.

A kind smile that was as if he was saying, *“I’ll accept everything about you.”*

It was definitely an illusion, but the sunlight that was shining in from the window, felt like it was sparkling and shining, wrapping around him as if he was being blessed. It didn’t mean that he was emanating magical power, or that he was even a prince from inside a picture book.

**Ayaka:** “.....It’s normal.”

Somehow, she slightly says it while forming a calm voice.

She focuses on the cooking task before her eyes. ‘Let’s finish this quickly.’

Quickly she makes the breakfast.

In the Fresh Vegetable Salad, are Sunny Side-Up Fried Eggs. As well as toast. Sausages which were also prepared because he came up to her and asked, *“Don’t you have any meat?”* are also fried.

*Meat. Oh, meat———*

Meat, stuff that comes from the bodies of living beings are no good to her. She can’t stand it. Blood too. So, sausages. The feel of the meat, the non-impression of blood, ready-made stuff, she couldn’t handle those kinds of meats unless it was this style of processed food. She can only say, that she is disqualified as a Black Magus. The bandage that was wrapped around a finger on her left hand was good proof of it.

Although Ayaka thinks that she’s pitiful, there was just no helping it on this.

**Saber:** “It looks delicious.”

**Ayaka:** “I just, sliced and fried it.”

**Saber:** “Skills can also be applied to simple tasks. The same goes for swords, and kitchen knives too.”

**Ayaka:** “.....”

Without deliberately answering it, she begins to try and set the dining room table.

And, as if she was anticipating it, he had done it in a blink of an eye.

He did all the rest to the extent, that Ayaka came in carrying the cups and milk that was taken out from the fridge.

**Ayaka:** “..... Thank you.”

*‘For once, let me say thank you.’*

Without hearing his reply, she arrives at the table, he clearly says, “*Thanks for the food*” in the seat next to Ayaka who softly says, “*Thanks for the food*” and chews on it. Breakfast begins. First is the piece of tomato, after putting it in her mouth, she eats the Sunny Side-Up Fried Eggs———

*‘Aah.’ ‘Did it again.’*

Despite not being aware of it.

Ayaka exhales a sigh in her thoughts.

In her usual habit, she had yet again, made Sunny Side-up Fried Eggs.

**Saber:** “My apologies, I take it that it would’ve been better if I hadn’t of heard that, right?”

She, didn’t say anything. In any case, he whose place is as the most excellent Servant, knew what Ayaka didn’t want to say. Was it because he had a magical connection with his Master, no that is not the case, he is just merely perceptive.

Straightaway, she speculates something. *‘Even now, he, absolutely knows what I’m apologizing for.’*

**Saber:** “The Sunny Side-Up Fried Eggs, I like them with either frying method. So, I do not mind letting you give them to me in your favourite style.”

**Ayaka:** “Um, okay.....”

See. He knows.

Without batting her eyes to him, Ayaka nods.

**Ayaka:** (Like, huh?)

She whispers in her mind. Like she was trying to avoid his perception, quietly.

Although Turnover eggs are really her favourite, no, although it was, now, she’s not really sure whether that’s the case anymore. After all she had continued to make the Sunny Side-Up Fried Eggs which her big sister had always liked.

In the first place, she liked Turnover eggs when she was younger, so she might’ve discovered her tastes with her modest rebellious spirit towards her big sister who was perfect.

Suddenly———

Without knowing it, Ayaka was looking out the window.

8 years ago. It was as if she was dancing around and around, in that spot where that person was basking in the morning sun.

**Ayaka:** “..... Hey, Saber”

**Saber:** “What is it?”

**Ayaka:** “You, you were my older sister’s Servant. In the Holy Grail War, 8 years ago, weren’t you?”

**Saber:** “That’s right. Manaka was my Master.”

**Ayaka:** “What kind of Master, was she? My older sister, that is.....”

*‘A genuine curiosity.’*

*‘That’s probably, all that it is,’* Ayaka thinks to herself.

Was it because she had hated to continue her meal in still silence, or that it might even be better for her to hear a lot or even a little bit of information about the Holy Grail War, a couple of reasons come to her mind. But, the most closest one, is that she thinks she’s curious. Cause she had suddenly become bothered about it. She still spoke of it at any rate.

**Saber:** “Manaka, well let’s see, she was an excellent Magus.”

He smiles.

**Saber:** “She was very talented. She was not very forgiving to other Magi, but even so, I felt that she carried no less than first grade talent, somehow.”

**Ayaka:** “Huh?”

She was feeling, hooked on his words.  
She completely tilts her head.

**Ayaka:** “Oh. Your memory of last time, about the first Holy Grail War is fuzzy, right? I believe you’ve mentioned that before.”

**Saber:** “Ah..... Um, yes.”

8 years ago, he was also participating in the Holy Grail War.

The first ranked Heroic Spirit of the Sword. He, fought as my older sister’s, Manaka Sajyou’s Servant, entirely defeating the other six Heroic Spirits and had obtained the Holy Grail. However, right before that happened, he broke his contract——

**Ayaka:** “Aftereffects, right. Is your memory from after being summoned this time, alright?”

**Saber:** “Oh, yes. There’s no need to worry, the only unreliable part of my memory, concerns the events of 8 years ago.”

He gives a nod.

It didn’t appear like there was something wrong with him.

He, was a flawless person. A person? No, a Heroic Spirit. Nestling close to herself who is the lowest of the seven ranked Masters – Princes, he is the first ranked Servant, who had sworn to fight alongside her in this Holy Grail War.

His smiling figure, is truly refined like a hero drawn in a picture book. And yet it’s overflowing with such a lively energy——

**Ayaka:** (Huh?)

His usual smiling face.

Even though it should’ve been that, now, for just a brief moment.



There's somehow, a seemingly sad, apologetic, almost unpleasant weird look on his face. Indeed, it's like its being suspended on his face?

**Ayaka:** "Saber?"

**Saber:** "Ayaka. May I also ask you a question?"

**Ayak a:** "Huh, um, sure."

**Saber:** "Your older sister. About Manaka Sajyou, how did you feel about her?"



Big Sister———

My big sister Manaka.

A person who shone more than anyone else.

A person who ran through the Holy Grail War of eight years ago, alongside Saber.

The me of that time was still young, so there are a lot of things that I can't remember now, but, I can definitely remember some things.

For example, right.

I, about my big sister, have always———

———A lump of meat.

**Ayaka:** "About my big sister?"

I———

**Ayaka:** "I....."

Have always———

**Ayaka:** ".....Um, well. About my big sister, I liked her. She could do anything magic as well as studying, besides, she was pretty."

———A scream.

**Ayaka:** "Well, you see my big sister's hair used to glitter and sparkle so clearly in the sun. It was, very pretty, and wonderful."

It's not a lie———

**Ayaka:** "Although the time that we spent together wasn't long, the times that we were together, she was always kind to me."



It's not a lie———  
It's not a lie———  
It's true.

———Red.

My older sister who was able to do anything well, no, my big sister.  
A pretty person. My Big Sis Manaka.  
Along with my father, she was a person, who was surely kind to me.  
To the me, who is ordinary and incapable of anything.

**Ayaka:** "I loved her."

I say it, once more.  
I try to smile.  
While praying, that I wasn't making an awkward face.



Needless concerns. Well, I hope that's all they are.

Right, they're probably nothing more than needless concerns.  
All of the entries jotted down in this notebook do not mean a thing.  
Because a **Second Holy Grail War** will never be held again.

Regardless of whom the victor is, my family lineage will never be involved in the Holy Grail War again.  
The miracle of the Holy Grail will not happen again.  
Someone alone will reach the root without fail.  
With that, it's the end.

But. If by any chance.  
If it comes to be, then are the words that the Overseer let slip to me the other day the truth?

(An extract from an old notebook)



And then———

And then, the girl reaches Garden.

Taking in lots of the morning sun, are the glass walls and ceiling.

In the center of its radiance, she looks at the flock of pigeons who are swarming at her feet, while she thinks about the existence of the bandage that's wrapped around her own finger; she gently gathers one of the birds into her arms.

The girl thinks on the past.

There are not many things that she can remember anymore, her memories of 8 years ago for one.

Her memories of her older sister.

Her memories of her father.

The girl contemplates on a few things.

There were only two things that she could remember in fragments.

She has no memories, about her mother.

**Saber:** “.....Ayaka.”

The voice of a young man who she had gotten used to hearing resounds.

Immediately close to the glass door of Garden's entryway, was the figure of him. Due to the shining sunlight, even if shadows were to fall on his face, the girl knows his expressions well.

He is, surely smiling. Even now.

Gently releasing, the pigeon that she carried in her arms.

The girl nods straight, at he who had green eyes.

**Ayaka:** “Yeah, let’s go.”

———*And then, I will walk.*

———*The year is 1999.*

*Towards the Second Holy Grail War being held in this Tokyo again.*





# Special ACT : Servants

## Special Act “Servants”

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*The girl is once again being toyed with by the Holy Grail War*

On a certain day in February 1999, 8:25 A.M.  
Suginami District, A Private High School’s Front Main Gate.

Lots of students are going to school.

There are students who are walking and chatting while linking up with someone, students who discover their friends and exchange greetings with them, students who were waving their hands in all directions endeavouring to make an effort in their morning training in the school yard, while some are quietly passing through the school gates by themselves.

In Ayaka Sajyou’s case, she sorted into the last category.

There were hardly any times when she’ll say, *“I’m together with someone on the way to school.”* She’ll reply when greeted, of course, but she won’t ever find someone by herself or call out to them, she also won’t ever consciously gaze at the morning schoolyard because that’s the one scenery that she always passes by.

That’s why, she is alone again today. She is walking, amongst kids of the same age who wore the same uniform as her.

Towards the entrance, which she passes through while giving a slight bow to the educational guidance instructor who stands at the side of the main gate.

Since when did it start———

Since when did she naturally choose to be alone.

Even if she could make a friend who she’d might call a *“bestie,”* she’d keep to a certain level of distance with them.

Even now, if she were to consider trying to search for one then she’d probably find one or two classmates, although elementary and middle school should have the same students, she wouldn’t be aware of them.

It should be wrong for her to say, *“I have no friends.”*

It’s not like she didn’t have friends to call as such. Among her female classmates, she had a few, a girl who she speaks relatively well with, and a girl who shares some subjects with her.

**Ayaka:** (... ..Yeah. There’s a few)

Ayaka mutters in her thoughts.

Friends. If she didn’t have many, then she was aware of it.

Is it her fate as a magus?

Should she keep adequate relationships with the world?



It may be right, or it might be wrong for her. Even so, until **8 years ago** or more specifically———back when she was an elementary student, she felt like the number of her friends was just a bit more than the ones she had now.  
The reason soon appears in her mind.

8 years ago, what happened to her when she was a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade elementary student?  
Or rather to be exact, then “not to herself,” but what had happened in her own surroundings?  
8 years ago, **the magic ritual** held in Tokyo of 1991, took away her father and older sister, as a result, lots of the sceneries that Ayaka lived in had completely changed.

**Ayaka:** (*The Holy Grail War. The second one, a large-scale magic ritual for the sake of a great ambition.*)

She recalls the name of the ritual.  
Usually, despite not having to be consciously on the lookout for some kind of magical entanglements while at school, the one who thought like this, believes that it couldn't be helped even for herself.  
After all, it, has already **started**.

On the night of that day, although she couldn't clearly remember much about the sensation of the blade piercing through this chest———no, she didn't want to remember that———but, her fear of that time, was able to revive her vivid memories of it. If she were to let her mind wander even the slightest, then even her walking along like this could be an illusion or a desire, but that's something that's not in this reality, her real self is not in the middle of going to die by being pierced through the chest by a lance in the middle of Garden, so even that seems like an illusion.  
Her feet, her entire body, appears to be trembling from the bottom of her heart.

She appears petrified.  
'*I am weak.*' She was fully aware of that. If she surrenders herself to her fear now, then there's no doubt that all of herself will be blotted out in the blink of an eye.  
'*But, that's not going to happen.*'  
'*I'm going to walk. I will pass through the main gate, and head towards the entrance. It's alright.*'  
'*Because this single-feathered Command Seal engraved on my chest, tells me that I am never alone.*'  
'**He** who is clad in blue and silver, is my ———'

???: “Good Morning, Sajyou.”

**Ayaka:** “Ah, oh, Good Morning, Isemi———”

Suddenly a voice calls out to her, so she turns around.

Since she was completely concentrating on her own inner self-conscious, her behavioural response became somewhat awkward. Her expression really became that of a surprised person, and more than anything, her voice. She, might've toppled over a bit.  
As for, the voice's master who greeted her with “*Good Morning,*” everything was perfect with him.

A bright voice. Cheerful looks. On top of that, he's ecstatically, raising his right hand up high like that.

The transfer student, Isemi. A classmate with brightly coloured hair, who had transferred in at a strange time.

**Isemi/Rider:** "Nice weather today, huh? You're making quite the gloomy face, are you worried about something? Is it about today's pop quiz?"

**Ayaka:** "Umm."

Pointing three topics at her at once, she is lost, for a moment.

*'Nice weather. I guess that's true.'*

*'I don't think I'm making a gloomy face, but I am concerned about something. Although, I can't mention it to people.'*

*'Umm, was there a short quiz scheduled for today?'*

**Isemi/Rider:** "Miss Sajyou. You, often go to school a lot by yourself, don't you?"

**Ayaka:** "Huh.....?"

*'Just as I was wondering about where I should start answering from, another topic already?'*

**Isemi/Rider:** "I wonder, do you like being alone?"

**Ayaka:** "N-No, not at all."

**Isemi/Rider:** "Don't you?"

Isemi's bright face, was closer than she had anticipated.

He easily steps over the "certain" distance which Ayaka half-unconsciously created, coming at her with smile in his expression which suited the morning cheeriness. It's a friendly enough face. He always, shows this expression, within their circle of classmates.

*'Come to think of it, I don't think I've ever seen him alone?'*

**Ayaka:** (.....What is it?)

She recalls the pigeons who'd often come gathering at her feet, when she was a child. Recently, although the pigeons seem to be the same as usual, crows have been growing attached to her as well even though this wasn't the case before.

Ayaka didn't know, of a friend who'd approach her like this.

If it's a human boy, especially so.

Suddenly, Saber's profile crosses the back of her mind.

Although, he has the outer appearance of man about a little bit older than herself, he is not human. So, for a young man to naturally approach her like this, too, is weird for her———

**Isemi/Rider:** "You see, my friend was also a child who was alone a lot. However, everything about him is different from you."

**Ayaka:** "Isemi.....is this friend, a friend from your previous school?"

**Isemi/Rider:** "Oh! Speaking of school, Sajyou, the rumours of the south side school building, have you already heard them?"



**Ayaka:** “Huh??”

He answered her question with a question.

Moreover. The subject. It was like he had suddenly changed it again.

As Ayaka is tilting her neck with her thoughts, Isemi kept on piling his words one after the other. According to him, after school, there are rumours of an ominous phantom appearing in the south side of the school building, or is it that there are gas incidents or something repeatedly occurring in all kinds of places within the Tokyo metropolitan area? Whether it was a ghost story that he had heard from their classmates, or a story that was in the newspaper or on TV, one after another his stories were very obscure and had invisible intentions hidden within them.

Either way, uninformed Ayaka just tilts her head.

**Ayaka:** “You know, Isemi, for someone who just transferred in, you certainly are well-informed.....”

**Isemi/Rider:** “That’s not true. It hasn’t been very long since I came here, and I seem to get dizzy with just the stuff that I don’t know about. Ah, but you know, there are a couple of things that I do know about.”

**Ayaka:** “What?”

**Isemi/Rider:** “About you for one. Miss Ayaka Sajyou.”

**Ayaka:** “Huh?”

Suddenly, he called her by her full name.

Without being able to answer him right away, Ayaka casts doubt at him with her gaze.

**Isemi/Rider:** “There are lots of times where a girl like yourself should be together with someone. And yet, you, have taken it upon yourself to choose to be alone. It’s true in the classroom, and it’s true even now.”

**Ayaka:** “T-That’s not.....”

*‘True.’*

And with that, Ayaka couldn’t declare it.

It’s the same when she goes to school, between classes, during lunch breaks, and even after school like this.

If she is able to talk then she’ll answer him, but there is hardly anything, that she can do by herself.

**Isemi/Rider:** “There is.”

The second, of the same exchange.

As she raises her gaze which had moved towards her feet, Isemi’s face was right there before her eyes. The transfer student who had in a blink of an eye obtained popularity with her female classmates, and whose bright coloured hair suits him well. A boy, who is friendly and always smiling.

**Ayaka:** “Are you, perhaps...?”

In that moment. From his face like that.

**Isemi/Rider:** “I wonder.....”

The usual bright look on his face disappears.

**Isemi/Rider:** “Do you perhaps hate humans?”

A feeling of nothingness, filled with a coldness similar to a mask, just like a———



———*In a place at the edge of Tokyo.  
There was a conflict surrounding the Holy Grail.*

———*The victor certainly existed.  
But, no one obtained the Grail.*

———*And then, 8 years later.  
1999.*

———*The Holy Grail, has once again manifested in this Tokyo.  
Under seven Masters, now, seven Servants will gather.*

———*The **Second Historical** Holy Grail War begins.*



*Servants.  
Heroic Spirits who have manifested.*

*Saber.  
Berserker.  
Archer.  
Lancer.  
Rider.  
Caster.  
Assassin.*

*The most powerful illusions that have been divided into seven  
classes by the Holy Grail.*

*They are very powerful.*

*As mentioned above.*

*They can split steel, smash the earth, and even pierce the sky.*

*They who have been constructed with temporary bodies by magic, are not proper living creatures.*

*Even if they do possess an appearance that resembles a human, they are not human. Hiding destructive power and a tenacity that far surpasses a human's, or a creature's, they manifest as they were in their legends.*

*But, they are also---*

(An extract from an old notebook)



Same day, Late at night.

Shinjuku Prefecture, Tokyo, Shinjuku Central Park.

Beyond the green trees that surrounded the West Shinjuku high-rise building, was a man.

All of a sudden, the man shows up, in front of the large water fountain which had taken its name from the Niagara river which flows down onto Lake Ontario. If someone were to perhaps witness it——— then although there are almost no homeless who would approach this midnight watering hole, in this season———they would probably receive it, as a man having appeared in this spot out of nowhere. For example, he instantaneously traversed space, or.

No. It is not space transference. It is a magic level **technique**.

The man had done nothing more than **released his spiritualisation**.

The truth is that he had been in this area since a while ago. Although, just not in a **form** that was visible to the eyes.

**Man:** “Now, then.”

He was a hero who was clad in armour.

His metallic armour which covers his left arm from over both of his shoulders, sparkles in the street lights.

Within the lightweight equipment on his right arm in contrast to his left arm, is a lone lance. Easily exceeding the man's tall height, it was a long lance that appears to be made out of wood.

It differs in appearance from the types of lances, which could be seen on Japanese battlefields in the past.

This is also true for his armour. It is reminiscent of foreign tastes. Including his lance and armour, his manly figure couldn't stand out very much against the surrounding scenery, so is it perhaps the



cataract-styled water fountain and the green trees' fault, then that it appears to have grown accustomed to him? From the start, this park is floating against the cityscape called West Shinjuku. Within this "*tall*" city of lined-up high-rise buildings which gives one the impression of a cutting-edge civilization, it is truly irregular, then for there to be a grandiose water fountain and a green park with an opened gaping wide entrance in it.

**Man 1:** "I've been knocking around the city centre, or perhaps I should say I've was trying to make my way here but ....."

As he closes one of his eyes, the man looks up at one of the high rise buildings———  
Looking up at the Shinjuku Sumitomo building, he twists his mouth.

**Man 1:** "Are you really in **here**? I'm way beyond speechless, you've got my admiration sir."

A second spiritualisation.

Like the dissolving sound of the water fountain's water, Lancer's figure vanishes.

West Shinjuku, in the group of high-rise buildings.

Until the Tokyo Metropolitan new government office building completed its construction a few years ago, the building which boasted West Shinjuku's largest surface height, was the Shinjuku Sumitomo building. The brilliance beneath one's eyes which can be seen from a height of 210 metres, can also make the illusion of one glimpsing into an ocean of stars.

Of course, there is no way they can be stars.

Those are after all, devices invented by humans.

In short, there's not much of a great difference between their application and a bonfire which lights up the night.

???: "Same as ever———"

One of the Heroic Spirits happened to be there.

It was a king like man, with sparkling gold hair.

**Man 2:** "Nay, it is the desire of a person whose rarely grown so magnificently fat. Not tired of his five desires, o' this capital which has even acquired the desire of consumption at the end of a hazy prosperity, is so ironically at its limits. I am in the body of a clown and as conceited as a king's castle without a king, so shall I burn myself on the **fires** of pleasure, I will build up my castle walls, all so I can reach the heavens!"

A hero among heroes.

A king among kings.

Therefore, they were the words that rule the present-day itself through the eyes of the city.

**Man 2:** "What a ridiculous thing. In a temple without its priest, what on earth are they praying to!?"



It is not arrogance.

It is not pomposity.

There are things that must be there, even for him, a genuine king who had appeared in Tokyo.

**Lancer:** “How should I know? Humans and the like, don’t seem to have changed much since my time.”

Undoing his spiritualisation———

Lancer materialized, in front of the golden Heroic Spirit’s eyes.

**Man 2:** “Is that your showpiece or a decoration, Lance user?”

**Lancer:** “Who knows?”

Before the eyes of his formidable enemy whom he must kill, he shrugs his shoulders in a calm manner. Of course, he also long noticed that the person in front of him, was able to sense his presence. Heroic Spirits who participate in the Holy Grail War, can sense the unique presence of a Servant. The conversation is different if it is in a specific spot, but its possibly risky for a Servant of any class hierarchy to venture a guess and just say, “*He’s approaching.*”

Even so he remains in this place, magnificently standing like this.

Like this.

He calls out, to the voice.

He knows just by looking that he’s not your average Servant.

To put it more aptly, he could grasp it if he can sense for signs with his skin and not his vision.

**Lancer:** *(Well, it’s not as if I particularly mind)*

He thinks of his own Master’s profile.

That is, what kind of a reaction will she make if he tells her about this golden-coloured hero?

Specifically, he was interested in what kind of facial expressions she’d make. No way, that’s, not in her nature to be surprised to know that the other guy is a formidable enemy.

**Lancer:** *(Saber is fine, but this guy is equal to well.... a reprehensible big shot.)*

‘Good grief.’

While exhaling a sigh, Lancer shrugs his shoulders.

Although he was told by his master, “*I don’t mind if you kill him.*” He should probably leave it, right here.

At the very least, he’s not an opponent to quarrel with in his current state with his Noble Phantasm still sealed.



———*In a place at the edge of Tokyo.  
There was a conflict surrounding the Holy Grail.*

———*Generally, people do not know about this large-scaled magic ritual.  
Only one person must be the victor.*

———*It is 8 years ago.  
1991.*

———*The manifested Holy Grail, is in this Tokyo.  
Under seven Masters, now, seven Servants will gather.*

———*The **First Historical** Holy Grail War has begun.*



On a certain day in February 1991, early dawn.  
Chuuouku District, Harumi Pier.

How should one compare, the shadows of the group of buildings which stretches across the coast line to?

Concerning the present era, since minimum information has been automatically brought, to they who hath materialized as Servants, it is said that we either fall down in impossible to understand confusion in front of seeing something for the first time, or we don't even feel the shock of surprise towards the unknown———but I'm unable to say it for sure.

'Ah, I see.' I guess he had become able to obtain a comprehension of some sort.  
For example, about the scene before him.

In the darkness of the early dawn which was past midnight, the giant shadow that was formed by the Tokyo Bay Waterfront District's high-rise building, even as he saw it contrast with the darkness of the sea beneath his eyes, Saber was not particularly surprised by it.

Harumi Pier.  
Besides himself on the coastal roads, they were uninhabited.  
Saber turns his gaze, towards the beyond.

Above the black Tokyo Bay———  
There, magnificently and even sublimely towering over the surroundings, **he could see a figure of a glittering temple.**  
But it isn't just one temple.

Many temples forms its majestic appearance by heaping them into multiple layers, making it an extra-large temple complex. If he assumes that all of the passageways which are visible to his eyes were something that actually exists and are not illusions, then he could measure it with his eyes that it's something whose over-all length is easily a few kilometres. Its majestic appearance was as if it had fallen down on top of the sea, just like the starry night. In this city which has lost most of its starlight because of the light that filled the earth's surface, it is far too ironic.

Without realizing it, he had become captivated by it.

He cannot say that he knows much, in the sense of only having knowledge of a minimum amount of things, and yet it shouldn't be that greatly different from it and the shadow of the buildings running along the bay.

The cluster of lights floating on the sea, is beautiful.

Without restraining himself, the scene seemed worthy enough for him to value it.

But. However. That was not the shine of a real starry night.  
It is merely reflecting the prana brought by the Heroic Spirit whom he must defeat along with its luminescence.

That name———Truly, this is a large shining temple complex.

**Manaka:** “Rider’s Noble Phantasm, huh? I don’t, want to let you go into that kind of place.”

**Saber:** “Manaka.”

While calling out her name, he turns around to the Master beside him.

As she allows the temple’s glittering radiance to be reflected in them, his cloudy eyes were uneasily staring at himself.

For example, if the entirety of this city were not the battlefield for which he would cross swords on while seeking the Holy Grail, then as a knight, it made him believe that he should offer up a poem to her ———to her eyes, which were filled with such loveliness.

It’s as if the wisdom of the stars dwelt there, in her eyes.

However, they are blurring. They are shaking uneasily.

Saber grasped, that the reason for it, was because of his apprehensions for what the girl was stashing away in the depth of her eyes.

**Saber:** “That temple was deployed in order to summon me. More precisely, me, Archer, and Lancer. Seeing that the movements of the other two are still unclear, at the very least I must go, otherwise, he might carry out his proclamation.”

**Manaka:** “You mustn’t. By yourself, how!”

**Saber:** “I am aware of the danger.”

Rider who can control many Noble Phantasms is a powerful Heroic Spirit even if he is an individual. Moreover, upon ascertaining that at least two of the giant beasts which had shown its might in the battle the other day were present inside of the temple on top of the ocean, it’s not hard to imagine that the temple itself is a threat to him.

That temple is, most likely something similar to a reality marble.

Noble Phantasms which are controlled by the Heroic Spirits who participate in the Holy Grail War are all powerful weapons in general, but Rider’s one is in a different order of magnitude. Literally, he can say that his opponent differs in rank from average heroes and great men. It could be a case, where he is just calling himself a “*king among kings*.”

And, that he is longing for such a title.

By settling it with Saber.

If he doesn’t respond to his “*invitation*” to his great temple which is visible from yonder, then he probably will turn the whole of Tokyo into a sea of fire without waiting for the dawn with his flying solar ship. Since Rider has just enough power to make that kind of violence possible, there is only a few facing him in number, but he really feels that this Heroic Spirit is not the kind of person who’d similarly drop threats of only lip service.

Tokyo. This, capital at the end of the east.



It'll never be Britain to him, nor will the people who live there be his subjects.  
Even so———

**Saber:** “This is my selfish wish. I, I want to stop him!”

**Manaka:** “Really, I see. So, even you, can sometimes whine like a small child. “

**Saber:** “I’m so sorry.”

**Manaka:** “..... Please, don’t make that face. I’m the one who should’ve been able to do something for you as your Master.”

Quietly, the girl who is his master nods.  
Originally, they were unbelievable words.

This very young girl, while serving as an enemy who should be defeating the head of a family of mysteries which are controlled by magi that crosses over dozens of names, the one who boasts that she’ll “*do something about it by herself*” and so on, even supposing that she had a natural talent for magic, no, first of all, he should probably judge whether she’s speaking the impossible. That family is in the mountain district of the western part of Tokyo, hiding in the depths of their magic workshop which has strong barriers stretched around it.

In a magical fortress, or even in a labyrinth full of death traps.  
A frail girl, shouldn’t even be able to sneak in there. Even if she does accomplish it, there should be no way that she could challenge and survive a magic battle with dozens of magi as her opponents, all by herself.  
But, Saber quietly informed the girl.

“*Thank you.*”

Since he already knew, the power of the Master who will face the Holy Grail War together with himself.

**Manaka:** “Honestly, geez! You really are a very egoistical prince, you know that.”

His Master———

Manaka Sajyou, comes and nestles tightly close to him.

The girl’s green dress overlaps, with his blue and silver armour. It is undoubtably her intention, to not make him feel the weight of her body. Although they have gotten much closer recently, Manaka, has consistently never directly **touched** Saber by herself.

**Manaka:** “You really can’t get enough of saving others, can you? They’re so fragile and fleeting, humans that is.”

The girl’s pure white fingertips, the palm of her hand, turns towards his silver coloured breastplate. Like that she places her palm against his chest. The truth is, that is, while stopping a bit on the brink of it.....

**Manaka:** “You always make me worry about you.”

Her cheeks puff up a little.  
It was a charming gesture.

Were it not for this dark slaughter and so on, if it's certainly fit for a flower garden with bright sunshine pouring in it, then it is the gesture of a flower that reminds one of brilliance and innocence. After that, all of a sudden, she looks up at Saber's face in a '*I just had an idea*' kind of manner.

Slightly, her expression darkens.

**Manaka:** "I worry about you. I worry, and worry, to the point where I might cry, but....."

As it is, with a smile on her troubled face.

**Manaka:** "But you know, the me who isn't worried, is here somewhere in my heart too. Because I know you won't lose, no matter what kind of Heroic Spirit you face. For the sword that you wield, will tear apart all of your enemies, the radiance that you flourish, will smash up all of your enemies. Hey, Saber. My Saber. Even if the Holy Grail War were to perhaps be carried out **again**, I———"

**Saber:** "You won't lose. To anyone, right"

Quiet words.

His voice fully melts, into the night sky where the few number of stars contrasts with the ocean's surface.

Directly after that———

The presence of a giant body, comes flying out. As if on reflex, he spins his arm around Manaka's waist, taking to a defensive stance.

He counter-attacks without thinking, while planning only of the perfect defence for his Master, he sharpens his gaze. Without 2 seconds lapsing, the shadow is visible in his field of vision. The gigantic body which probably came flying drawing an arc from above Tokyo Bay, **lands** clearly, in front of his gaze.

Its huge body which is more than a semi-trailer, was easily landing without even so much as an impact.

Its speed and mass, disregards the lethal amount of energy which ought to be taken to both its giant body and the hard road surface, killing the laws of physics, while spreading just enough wind to softly **rustle** the girl's skirt.

It was a human face.

It was a lion.

With a face that wore a characteristic headdress on it, it had the body of a lion which is the king of beasts.

Gigantic. A giant body. A huge frame.

A miraculous beast that was endowed with overwhelming mass.

It, with a quiet look which made one feel as if it had a type of sacredness to it, was looking down at Saber and Manaka with a pair of lightless eyes. A scout, or a vanguard? Or is it an intentional messenger who is here to inform him of his second invitation?

**Saber:** “Rider’s Sphinx———”

The giant beast’s name escapes from Saber’s lips.

It is the name, of something which shouldn’t be stepping firmly on the earth in this modern era. A legendary monster spoken of in Babylonia and Ancient Greece, as a human headed-lion bodied Chimera. In the further distant past, in Ancient Egypt of a few thousand years ago, it was a legendary quadrupedal beast that was feared as the manifestation of raging wind and flames, the incarnation of Horus in the surface world who governs the heavens. Its other name, is said to be Abū al-Hawl<sup>4</sup>.

A beast with many legends running from the Mediterranean Sea to West Asia. If an inexperienced Magus was the one in this spot, then they might have misunderstood it right away as “*What kind of Monstrous Beast has he summoned,*” however, there is utterly no reason to fit **this** into the container of a Monstrous Beast.

So then, what is it?

That is———

A thing that dwells within legends.

A thing that sleeps within illusions.

A thing that exists within myths.

---

<sup>4</sup> *Abū al-Hawl: Father of Terror*



A Phantasmal Species.

A beast that has been imagined. A being only spoken of within old legends.

Not equal to any well-known life-form, these beings who have transformed themselves into the form of mysteries themselves, has been classified according to court rank *into* 'Monstrous Beasts,' 'Phantasmal Beasts,' and 'Divine Beasts.'

In that case, this..... This great beast is something else.

It is something, that makes demons fall prostrate, destroys illusions, and governs the earth's surface with its sacred might.

A Divine Beast——Falling under the undoubtedly highest rank if one excludes dragon kin, it's a holy beast!

**Sphinx:** "■■■■■■■■■■———!"

The huge divine beast roars. Its face which should have been silent is twisting angrily, affixing a bestial expression with its teeth bared in a form **similar to a human** with animosity on their face, it howls at the sky with a few stars in it.

The stillness of Harumi Pier, gets torn in that instant.

**Saber:** "Go ahead. Manaka. I shall settle this and proceed to Rider's temple."

**Manaka:** "Saber."

**Saber:** "Manaka. Please."

*'I guess, I shall probably never become a refined knight.'*

Half-automatically, he thinks in a small corner of his thoughts and intellect which instantly specialized towards combat.

In a situation where he must show one smile towards the girl who is concerned for the knight's safety, like this, he just thrusts a sharp glare at the monster.

In return, Saber slightly shifts his hand from around the girl's waist, to gently touch her shoulder.

**Manaka:** "..... I, I understand."

The girl, quietly nods.

From his opened lips which just wanted to say something, are just words of affirmation.

*"No, I won't let any of you escape."*

Raising a roar as if he is telling him this, the giant beast **merely controls his glare** as Saber prepares his invisible sword.

And then———



**Rider:** “Ho, ho. How Interesting! Far from 3, do they intend to prove that they can take on our “beast” with just one Servant? Although it’s a mere fragment of my power, my glory, to take on my lion-bodied beast of the hot sands which can massacre even entire armies.....”

On top of Tokyo Bay, is a great temple complex.

Inside the deepest part of the main temple.

In a dark room with a giant mysterious ominous orb in it.

While being illuminated by the pale lights of a few veins which resembles enormous magic circuits, the **king** smiles.

**Rider:** “———Fine then. In that case show me your struggle to your hearts content, O’ lightless ones.”



Harumi, the Tokyo International Trade Fairgrounds.  
Its premises on Main Street.

Undoubtedly the word “*trampled*,” is a very appropriate word for it.

An asphalt surface which has been abruptly smashed with giant feet, a group of semitrailers squashed by the impact of its landing.

*‘Though deterioration is still being called out on it, to think that the outer walls of a venue which can accommodate thousands of people, would be abruptly smashed by a beast’s frontal legs is completely unbelievable and so on,’ or so someone would think.*

Since its already the period of early dawn, is it solely lucky for him that it appears to be uninhabited?

The battle between Saber and the Sphinx, had reached, this, an area that is on par with an extremely large exhibition centre. Its claws which bring more destruction than he had predicted from their appearance, and its fangs, have been lunging at him one by one at a speed that ought to be admired.

It is far swifter than a natural creature’s, for example more than the movements of a lion cub or tiger. To carry out all of its movements so far with its giant body, how much speed do its fangs and the tips of its claws have?

The shockwave and the destructive sound which resounds after they executed their attacks, tell of a reality which must wonderous. While running across, the road surface, the wall, and the rooftop, Saber dodges those attacks.

He avoids, its massive attacks.

He avoids, its rapid consecutive attacks.



While dodging everything, he turns his gaze precisely towards the centre of the giant beast. The one who is waiting for an opportunity to counter-attack while grasping a complete picture of his target as an outline. Is it a quirk of its attack movements, or a breathing interval between its consecutive attacks, either way, he is waiting for said “gap.”

But. The giant beast, seems to somehow possess a high intelligence. It employs its flying ability, to irregularly keep up its attacks from every direction with 3D manoeuvring, and there is not even the slightest sign of it losing that momentum. What is Saber waiting for, an action that he understood.

And then, again———  
He shows that he will even execute feints.

A deliberate **futile strike** amidst the repeated attacks. It destroys the venue’s wall, scattering it into pieces. Although Servants basically can’t tolerate attacks that don’t include mana, they can be affected to a certain extent by the “*secondary effects which are brought by attacks that have mana.*”

**Saber:** “.....ngh!”

He avoids the flying reinforced concrete fragments, in that instant.....  
Something that hadn’t even been carried out even once before, a full-speed giant beast attack that used all 4 of its legs!  
His second evasive action to cancel his evasive action to the fragments, is too late, he didn’t make it in time. If that’s the case, Saber chooses the back of his sword blade as his shield and raises it in front of his own body.

It’s not a perfect evasion, but a defensive stance which intercepts the attack from head on———!  
A crash. It’s heavy. Too heavy.

Using an additional mana burst at the same time as a gradual wind prana release which he stashes away in Invisible Air, a Noble Phantasm that encircles his invisible sword, he once again doesn’t stop to catch the giant beast’s rush blow. An impact that’s ostensibly enough to crack his whole body assails Saber. A delusion like one of a metallic sound echoing from somewhere, is it the sound of his entire skeleton creaking? Even so, it’s not him whose honestly taking damage at the end.

Despite slapping down on the ground while also smashing some outer venue walls with its charge, the giant beast, is probably thinking about provoking him into a finishing blow with its claws.

**Saber:** (I see.)

Saber comprehends, in a corner of his thoughts.

**Saber:** (It’s quite, the beast.....!)

The wind which releases from his sword with a violent force, changes its vectors. From its shape as it tries to stop it head on, it turns into a **fending off** shape. At the same time, while Saber side-spins

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instantly assaults Saber, by turning into a firestorm that fully burns and crushes its enemies. Seemingly called by the swordsman's stance, it's a pre-emptive, supernatural blow!

A furious attack as if it's made to embody a fragment of the power governed by the sky father, Horus, it instantly carbonizes a row of the main street premises' trees, as it directly hits the east building——— of the huge venue with its dome-shaped roof. The east building of the trade fair venue which is commonly known to youths by its nickname which is associated with the “monster” who appears in special effects films because of its shape, melted like heated toffee, in less than a few seconds.

If that's so, then where's Saber?

Did he get burned by the flames, crushed by the wind, or vanished like mist as he lost his soul's core along with his temporary body?

No. That's not it.

Behold, the giant beast's head. At the spot where its human face should be.

There's, now, a huge gaping wide hole in it.

Changing his own body and sword, into a single arrow which has been nocked to a bow and drawn to its limit, Saber pierced through the whole firestorm and the giant beast's head from right through the front of it.

But, the swordsman's figure cannot be seen beyond the giant hole in its head. *'Where is he?'* The giant beast who had lost its face, with its abnormal vitality, it starts turning its head which had probably lost a great deal of its brain and starts looking around restlessly for him.

*'———He's, above me.'*

What the sky silver swordsman who is twirling at approximately 200 metres in the sky is firmly treading on, is the night-time starry sky. In addition to a dropping motion, he is accelerating himself by literally kicking the air in the atmosphere, in a stance that'll execute his second blow which is accompanied by a second acceleration triggered by a mana burst. Already, he is brandishing his invisible sword in a grand way. With this second attack, it's clear that he is aiming to bisect the giant beast.

With its face still gone, the giant beast flips its upper body up. As if it is telling him that even damages to the head and such will not be received as internal damage, it aims for the swordsman with both of his frontal leg claws which had turned red-hot with prana. It counters Saber who carries out his rapid drop strike, with a simultaneous attack from the left and right. With no face, no eyeballs, nor regardless of whether it is completely losing its vision, the giant beast's claws were too precise. They have plenty of speed too. Whether he is equipped with mana compiled armour or not, it doesn't mean anything before these claws.

After all, he is no longer, just smashing Rider's enemies.

Its left and right frontal legs———

———Its red-hot claws, shatter.

———Against his invisible blade which is rotating at high speed.

———Against his merciless dancing blade.

Is this also, an infringement?

He'd probably wouldn't call it slashing.

Forcibly rotating his entire body and sword to the side at high speed by using the Barrier of the Wind King in unison with a mana burst that was loaded with his full power, Saber was scraping off the giant beast's claws as he was falling. There is nobody who could watch how many rotations he had performed during those seconds. Already, there's also no eyeballs or face on the giant beast as well.

Furthermore, while keeping up his rotations, his drop strike instantly scrapes from the faceless giant beast's head to its torso.

Bisecting it———

He cannot say, that he evenly divided it in two.

**Saber:** “.....Now.”

When the landed Saber stood up.

The beast of wind and fire, was no longer, only the traces of its limbs were left behind.

**Saber:** “As promised. Let's settle this, Rider.”

# Fragments

## Fragment 1

---

### *Convenience Store*

—————*Now that I've noticed, we've been talking for quite a long time.*

*5 minutes.*

*10 minutes.*

*30 minutes.*

*An hour.*

*2 hours.*

*3 hours.*

*As I look at my round clock hanging on my 6-tatami mat room wall, the hour hand is indicating that it's 1 o'clock.*

*It's the middle of the night.*

*Oh crap, this is really bad.*

Tatsumi Kitano couldn't help but feel frustrated. His new fair golden-haired Caucasian like friend who had appeared at the same time as he was reading out the wording that was written in a notebook which was one of his deceased grandfather's belongings, is hiding way too many mysteries and curiosities about himself, and because each of the words that he spoke were curiously stimulating—————and because even Tatsumi who was gushing with interest was being questioned with this and that, he would extend the conversation, and before he knew it a few hours had passed while they were talking about that.

*I'm really.....*

*Really.....*

*.....hungry.*

Since they had continued talking until late at night without any dinner whatsoever, an empty stomach is simply unbearable to Tatsumi who is a growing male high school student.

*Now, what to do?*

*There's nothing decent in the refrigerator, and I think that there is only one cup of instant noodles in my stock. Still, I can't possibly slurp cup noodles by myself and leave my guest. Ha...now that it's come to this, my choices are limited. Here's one, I'll go and get some food by going to nearest convenience store.*

**Berserker:** "A corner store?"

My sudden guest and even newest friend, Berserker tilts his head.

*'Wasn't knowledge about modern society automatically given to him, I believe but if I were to ask, he'd probably reply with "Although there is the knowledge, I have little experience with it. Sorry."'*  
*I see, so it's like that?*

*'Is it maybe the same as the sensation where you can't actually feel it with your skin even if you read about history in a textbook,'* Tatsumi dimly thinks.

Although he might've not read it properly in a book himself.

**Tatsumi:** "A convenience store. There's one around here too. I think that shop, has produced about 4000 stores nationwide."

**Berserker:** "4000 stores?"

Berserker is showing an expression that says 'unbelievable.'

**Tatsumi:** "Yeah. I think I read it in the newspaper once."

**Berserker:** "Amazing. So, what you're saying is that a convenience store where they make meals and runs until midnight, is a kind of pub? My, it certainly differs from the knowledge that was bestowed on me by the Holy Grail....."

**Tatsumi:** "They can't make meals, but you can buy food there. Well, you'll see when we get there."

**Berserker:** "*Our problem is whether minors can enter the store,*" he said with a serious look on his face.

Although he probably didn't say it as a joke.

**Tatsumi:** "That's not the problem. Can't you understand it with your grail knowledge?"

**Berserker:** "I believe I understand the gist of it, but.....my apologies, I can't quite reconcile with it."

**Tatsumi:** "It must be hard, being a Servant."

While saying that, the pair put on their shoes and went outside. Leaving the small apartment, the pair walked through the Setagaya night towards the convenient store.



*Automatic doors.*

*Automatic opening and closing doors.*

*Or rather a door that's automatic.*

*'Certainly, it appears to have that function as per the knowledge that has been automatically granted to me.'*

As he fixedly stared at the glass doors which were automatically opening and closing in the convenience store entrance, Berserker instinctively deeply nodded.

*'It's deeply interesting. It detects human movements through an optical instrument that has been*



*installed in the upper part of the doors, which allow the doors to function.'*

The granted information tells him that it is something that uses compressed air and hydraulics, but Berserker surmises that this door probably uses the power of electricity.

*'If it's been quietly opening and shutting thus far, then is it perhaps the work of the solenoid valve? Be that as it may it's not like I excel in knowledge regarding engineering. It's conjecture. Speaking of which the branches of learning that I have studied, medicine, civil law, law, and pharmaceuticals are the main ones.'*

**Berserker:** “.....It's really, that popularised.”

*Certainly, I recall such mechanisms to have been invented somewhere either in Europe or the New World at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century which is my lifetime, though to say that it probably didn't get popularised in this not very wide world is probably just the assessment of it in those days. In particular, this type of model which opens and shuts like this would've naturally never been taken into consideration. Since it was commonplace for doors to be open by hand in the West————*

**Tatsumi:** “Heey. How long are gonna stare at those doors?”

**Berserker:** “Oh, sorry. I just got very interested in this thing.”

**Tatsumi:** “In the doors?”

**Berserker:** “The doors. Yes.”

*It would also probably bother the other customers if I kept staring the at the front entrance too much, and more than anything, I'm keeping my Master Tatsumi waiting.*

*Though I'm reluctant to leave my observations of these automatic doors here, let's step inside the store for now.*

*Even so these clothes are easy to move in.*

*According to Tatsumi's words my still manifested form is unsuited to a bit of night wandering, so I borrowed a set of clothes from him.*

*A bright blue tracksuit, made with polyester-styled jersey materials rich with elasticity.  
A jersey.*

*That's what Tatsumi called it.*

*According to the knowledge bestowed on me, it is probably a popular nickname for these clothes nowadays.*



**Tatsumi:** “.....”

*Berserker is wearing, my jersey and white shirt. Usually because allowing others to wear the clothes which you put on produces a very unimaginable feeling, it's the same as looking into a mirror, where viewing others normally becomes completely different. It's not a negative thing like*

*an unpleasant feeling or a discomfoting one, it's just weird.*

Tatsumi can tolerate to some extent, his own liableness to look and stare at him. But he is completely in a bind doing the same thing from beyond the point of caution.

**Berserker:** "Tatsumi?"

**Tatsumi:** "Uh, my bad. I was just spacing out. I guess clothes really do make the man."

*I must've felt like he would still draw attention to himself if per say it went like this——— "In the Setagaya prefecture where there's isn't much pedestrian traffic or regular traffic, an antique-looking English gentleman seemingly appears from beyond the automatic doors, into a convenience store enveloped by the peculiar tranquillity of the deep night" or something like that.*

*Which is why I got him to change his clothes.*

*For example, his clothes probably wouldn't pose a problem if we were in a lively town clamouring with high-rise buildings and commercial establishments, like Shinjuku, but.....since our heights are similar, he can easily wear it.....*

**Tatsumi:** "....."

*Let's not speak on the length of our legs.*

*What length.*

*I wonder if our skeletons are very different?*

Berserker who entered the store's interior, was still continuously showing that seemingly deeply interested expression of his at the automatic doors, he then halted after walking for a bit and is now fixedly observing everything.

The magazine shelves that have been installed in parallel right next to the glass styled automatic doors, the living commodities shelf facing across the aisle, the confectionery shelf right next to it, and the instant foodstuffs shelf.

*I can see it because his eyes are shining with enough curiosity that it makes me think, that there are no objects that don't pull his interest. He's just like my little sister when she was young, when I used to bring her to the department store's toy corner.*

*No.*

*Isn't there too much of a great difference between him and myself when I was young?*

**Tatsumi:** "Are convenient stores, really that unusual?"

**Berserker:** "Yes. Very much so."

Berserker nods, while staring at the drink shaped shelf which filled the wall.

**Berserker:** "This entire shelf is an electric refrigerator, isn't that right?"

**Tatsumi:** "Yep. You also had refrigerators in your era too, right?"

**Berserker:** "We had refrigerators, but they were something that cooled using ice. You see, electric

refrigerators came into being during the 20th century. I believe that they were implemented in the United States in 1913.”

**Tatsumi:** “That’s a long time ago.”

**Berserker:** “To me their cutting-edginess was also their strong point. Because it was right after my death.”

**Tatsumi:** “That so.....”

*Did I shake up a hornet’s nest?*

Tatsumi kept secretly reflecting in his mind, that he ought to be considerate of his new friend which he hadn’t done before up till now, as he knew that the friend in question, Berserker was pointing a quiet smile towards him.

*What?*

**Berserker:** “Please I don’t want you to worry so much about me, Master Tatsumi. Although I’m happy that I can mourn you for living in a modern era that’s far separated from my era, the fact is that it’s true that I have the personality of a deceased person. However, I’m happy that you think of me as more than a mere record.”

*He said something difficult.*

While being a bit lost on what to reply with, Tatsumi opened his mouth, and said “Got it.” While nodding, he said that.

*What the hell is the ‘Throne of Heroes?’, what sort of beings are Servants, or Heroic Spirits who have carved their beings into humanity’s history?*

Although he had heard the basics of it, along with an explanation of magic, and the mysteries who had hid themselves in the shadows of the world, Tatsumi himself was aware that his condition was far from holding any tight real feelings or understanding about it. Suddenly he thinks.

*Is this a similar sensation to Berserker’s when he had automatically been granted knowledge of the modern era?*

*I don’t know.*

*If we continue conversing like this, then someday, a time might come when I’ll understand him.*

Regardless, Tatsumi had responded by nodding at him.

*Berserker.*

*Real name Jekyll, or rather the anti-hero Hyde.*

*Certainly, he didn’t want to be treated as a **dead person** himself.*

Even like this, Tatsumi, accepted the words from his new friend who suddenly appeared in the corner of his light-bathed apartment.

**Berserker:** “Thank you.”

Leaving one smile, Berserker moves deeper into the aisle.

In his mind Tatsumi persuades himself that *‘Although I don’t have the confidence to make a suitable reply to him, he was able to say things in a dignified manner, and he didn’t lie to me at least.’*

*At least I didn’t catch sight of any signs of dissatisfied looks from Berserker, and judging by his reactions, he somehow seems to greatly like this one convenient store chain which boasts over 4000 stores nationwide. At this rate, he might also enjoy this corner which is smoothly lined up with stuff like bentou lunches, rice balls, sandwiches and furthermore sweet buns and southern bread.*

*But, even so.....*

*Even though I go through this everyday I’ve never had the slightest of discoveries to make, whether it’s the spot where they’re standing, something like this changes to a person with a different “looking angle.”*

*Berserker is surprised by the modern era.*

*I’m surprised by Berserker.*

*I see, so this can’t even be called equal in a sense.*

*While thinking like that, I walk inside the store while holding the provided shopping basket and then————*

**Berserker:** “I see, so this is.....a cellulose film.....no, plastic film!”

Rip rip.

A certain recognizable sound lightly echoed, along with an astonished voice.

**Tatsumi:** “!?”

*No way.*

*He couldn’t have!*

Hurriedly going around the corner in a panic, I spot Berserker.

*Ahh.*

*He did it.*

*He’s gone and done it now!*

In that instant, he had suddenly ripped off the film, while looking at the packaged rice ball————

**Tatsumi:** “Ahhhh! What the hell are you doing!?”

**Berserker:** “This is wondrous. A foodstuff that’s been individually packed in a plastic film. I wonder if this is a degrading polyolefin film. This is, indeed a hygienically excellent idea.”

**Tatsumi:** “Don’t open the commodity before paying for it! Is this how it is in England!?”

**Berserker:** “Ah, no, I just..... that is, before I knew it I had ripped it off. Sorry.....”

—————*Ah. For the first time, I saw this courteous young Englishman’s face turn red. And it will be about 10 minutes from now, when I, Tatsumi will be able to think calmly again.*

While apologizing to the shop assistant with Berserker in a mad rush, I buy the opened rice ball, along with the rice balls that I unintentionally chose and some sandwiches, finished paying while deceptively stating words like “umm, he’s just studying abroad, and he doesn’t know very much about Japan” in front of the register, and broke out of the store in a minor sprint. While pulling Berserker’s hand, I hurry, hurry, hurry, hurry back down the road home.

*No.*

*Wait.*

*Wait a minute.*

I notice this is probably rushing away too much, but all the same I’ve spontaneously bursted into laughing, and in the middle of it, my laughing voice which is muffled by the Setagaya night is resounding, “I thought you were a serious guy, but you’re, quite, the interesting one.”

Laughing as he said it, Tatsumi finally felt something

*He blushes.*

*He gets engrossed.*

*He has interests, and if he smiles, then he can definitely even cry.*

—————*Jekyll.*

*Or rather Hyde.*

*This my newly made friend.*

—————*Although he’s not exactly human, on the inside, he’s not so different from me.*

—————*Oh, right..*

*He’s unexpectedly quite flighty.*

*But I already trust him.*

*I’ve decided not to doubt his words.*

*This foreign youth, who has clear eyes and who is very similar to my grandpa.*

*So, for tonight, at this moment, I, Tatsumi Kitano have decided to add one thing that I’m aware of about him.*

**Tatsumi:** *‘It looks like I’ll be able to get along well with you.’*

## Fragment 2

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### *To My Unarmored Self*

A former memory.

A former scene.

It is, of a peaceful time.

A special time that was wrapped by a certain love————

Now it is already a far-off time.

It hasn't been recorded into human history, however, they are memories of vague days that can be strung together as a legend.

Mt. Hindarfjall.

Despite continuously being feared as an uninhabited devil's cave, in fact, the figure of the rose rune which brings apparent death on this mountain is already gone, nor is there fire or the shield of the gods which once protected me as I slept.

Since all of it was cleared away by my beloved Sigurd's demon sword, Gram.

In the place where I met him that was even like the final destination of fate itself, I who possessed the functions of a goddess as the daughter of the great god, Odin, I who am just an ordinary woman, I who am Brunhild, spent days of love with my beloved him.

I am waiting impatiently for him who has merely stepped out for his morning hunts, in the shadows of a tree, while tilting my ears to the lovely chirpings of the songbirds. If it was like before, still with my previous functions that were bestowed on me by the great god, I could properly grasp what those small, charming birds were saying, but, I already don't understand them anymore what with my body having become one of an ordinary woman's.

Even so, I'll offer up my thanks to them for their gentle singing voices.

After all, it's like, I can hear their chirping voices just as if they were blessing our happiness.

I became happy.

It became fun.

Even though I should be empty in my alone time, without him.

Wait.

A standby situation?

To the me who was a Valkyrie, it was, to decline all outputs and to stay here without making the slightest movement until the time for action.

Without wishing for anything, without thinking, without feeling, I would bide my time and turn



only to execute my orders.

Though it's not like I'm shutting down all my sensory devices, me in a standby situation was in a sense **just me existing**.

And yet, it's strange.

While waiting for my beloved, and recalling my slight concerns over when on earth will he coming back, I think about what kind of words of love should I tell him if he comes back, and smile at the songbirds who whisper to me as if they're consoling me————In this gentle period, I, feel something warm as expected.

???: "Brunhild."

*Ahh, I can hear him.*

*He came for me.*

*Again, he's returned, to my side!*

While bathing in the quiet sunlight filtering through the trees, the ultimate hero who is similarly clad in modest beads of light, the hero who defeated the greedy yet radiant evil dragon, Fafnir of Gnitaheidr, the son of Queen Hjördís and King Sigmund, Sigurd shows himself. Although I utter at his beauty with a sigh, the songbirds are flying around nearby as usual, and won't leave to go far away. Even as he carries that shot deer on his shoulders, these children will never be vigilant around him.

For like me, they know.

That he is a righteous person, he is the noble king of warriors, and the fact that he isn't the kind of person who would take a small life unreasonably.

**Brunhild:** "Welcome back."

I, go to greet him with my best smile.

*Welcome back, my darling.*

*My beloved Sigurd.*

*Thank you for the splendid game today as well.*

*What kind of meal should I make tonight?*

*Roasting it is good, but so is boiling it.*

*It's also good to make meatballs with it, although it will take a bit of time.*

*You said that you liked the meatballs that I make, Sigurd.*

*No, I believe I surely know, that you mean that you don't care what it is so long as it's something that I make————*

**Sigurd:** “Today, I suddenly obtained a new awareness about us.”

**Brunhild:** “Fufu. An amendment, what is it?”

**Sigurd:** “Hm?”

*What is he hesitating to tell me?*

I, show a new smile and tell him, “Please tell me. Beloved. Every one of your words, is my joy. It’s definitely true for you too, right?”

**Sigurd:** “Yes.”

Nodding deeply straight at me, you peek into my eyes.

*I’m startled.*

*What is it, I wonder?*

As I notice, the distance between us becomes much closer.

**Sigurd:** “Brunhild. I’ve fallen in love again, for you, who smiles so beautifully at the songbirds.”

**Brunhild:** “————— ! ”

**Sigurd:** “It’s my seventh love at first sight.”

**Brunhild:** “!!!”

*A sudden, new confession of love!*

*I thought that fire would come out of my face at this unexpected precedent.*

*Really! It’s so shocking, confusing, despite it being a relationship where we both already know even the rhythm of our breathing and have joined our bodies together countless times already, I’m blushing like an innocent young maiden today as well.*

Even though I don’t have a fragment of a desire to forcibly behave like that, with a fever that’s excessively and steadily rising in the pits of my stomach and in the depths of my head and cheeks, I can recall my delusions which would spit flames if I were to open my mouth————even though I haven’t been equipped with such obvious strike functions————I hadn’t a choice but to hang my head down with my mouth still closed.

*Damn it, good god, this god damn person!*

**Sigurd:** “Excuse me.”

Before my reddened and unmovable state, he gave an honest bow, and.....

**Sigurd:** “Forget it. It’s an amendment. One that would be better if I had told you that I had fallen in love with you. Your figure as you were frolicking with the songbirds in the sunlight filtering through the trees, is as expected, all too exquisite. My heart took shape. My body which has never

been suddenly hit no matter the enemy we faced, and which possesses natural offensive and defensive motions, shouldn't have known about the rough timing of my trance.....and yet, I truly lost myself in that moment. I understand now that it can shake our very selves, to the extent of wishing and wanting for this space and time called 'now' to tear itself apart. Even if you were to lose your body, or have your soul spirited away to the depths of Hel, I will most certainly reclaim you by defeating the female giant of Hel itself. Brunhild."

He speaks as such.  
Talkatively.

Despite normally very taciturn, he speaks fewer words even when we hold each other.

*Oh, geez!*  
*The person called you!*



A memory of love.  
A warm time.

Those very very precious and irreplaceable, treasurable days to me.  
Sigurd always surprises me, and much excites the additional function called love, that shouldn't have existed inside of me.

And yet.....  
And yet.....

The times that I spent especially while bathing in the gentle sunlight filtering through the trees, like this.....  
..... Are in truth, something that couldn't be obtained so easily.



*Just a bit before, my love was to confess his 7<sup>th</sup> love at first sight to me.*  
*Fully speaking, it was between his 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> confession.*

*I had a tiny problem. Of course, now that I'm being embraced by the huge joy called that person's love, it's not something that I could call a huge problem, and it's not like I couldn't even recall whether we were in the middle of being close to each other in the hall of Hindarfjall which turned from a prison of flames into the stage for a tryst, however, I simmered and gushed after I saw him off as he left for the morning hunt.*

*Rather, it was about the songbirds.*

The morning hours where the presence of dawn remains, although I wait until noon for that person's return in the sunlight filtering through the trees, during that time, I'll surely frighten the songbirds. This heel which is wrapped in mithril armour steps over the grass, and comes out to a place that has become just a bit more open for the fallen tree that had been struck by lightning, although it's not like they were entering a person's hands the songbirds would always fly away as if they were striving to escape from me.

*Yes, so.....To the me of that time, they really wouldn't let me hold them. In truth I can remember feeling a tinge of loneliness. It's really luxurious. I guess that makes me, greedy.*

Being wrapped in Sigurd's love no more than that, immersing our bodies and minds in love, and yet further seeking much more things than that. Even if I had intended to change it, my soul-carrying hands are something that define me as the oldest sister of the Valkyries who were given equal roles like the death gods by the great god, and even if I drop dirt into a clear stream, even though I can't wipe the signs of the battlefield, the death and deeply dyed blood of humans from myself.....I think to myself that I want to be fond of their small lives.

*Or, is it because I had become human?*

I thought in such a manner.

Thinking on it, when I was a righteous Valkyrie who possessed divinity, it didn't matter whether it was a bear or a wolf or a rabbit or a bird, they wouldn't show any particular reaction towards me. They treated like something that was just there, as if I was same as the wind and the earth, the mountains and the sun, and trees and the flowers. Even if the birds saw me wear the helmet of the gods as I subjugated the skies they wouldn't fly away, and even if I prowling the forest searching for the souls of heroes the beasts didn't ferociously howl at me.

It's wasn't just me, it was the same for my younger sisters. Yes, the me of that time, was not one of the humans who cleared the countryside with their intelligence and culture, and was probably a definite part of nature.

*Well for now, I am a complete human woman.*

*I'm glad.*

*I can, love him from that same standpoint as he does me.*

But, just for a bit. In the deepest corner of me which runs as my heart and not as a circuit, a tiny bit of a sad emotion, was born as I watched the shapes of the songbirds fly away.

—————*Alright.*

*Now then, let's try being somewhat creative.*

On a certain morning, I who had resolved myself like that while seeing his back off as he left for his hunt, headed towards that open spot as usual. Carefully alert, and without making a sound, I took care to step firmly over the earth step by step. Slowly, and quietly, just like a hunter carefully

targeting his prey, and not being vigilant enough when I moved that shred of grass. As I did so, ahh, I could see the songbirds playing while lovingly chirping.

While reassuring myself I proceeded further, and further, until finally I got very close to them. So as to not surprise them, so as to not frighten them, I said while creating a gentle tone “Good morning, little songbirds. I’m sorry for always startling you. I.....”

Before I could say my words until the end, all at once, the songbirds flew off.

*A failure.*

*It was a huge failure.*

Then during my next attempt, I tried using the concealment rune for next morning’s challenge, but the result was the same.

In the end, they who called out to me had escaped. Now that it’s come to this I who had fallen like a maiden who has been cold to her darling, and a wolf who was unable to hunt his prey at the last moment, had no choice but to express everything to that beloved person, who completely discerned my troubles with a glance, and asked me “What happened?” even though I should have met him with my usual unchanging smile.

**Sigurd:** “So, it went poorly for you.”

**Brunhild:** “Yes.”

**Sigurd:** “They also got frightened and flew away.”

**Brunhild:** “Yes.”

**Sigurd:** “Killing your breath or using a rune, isn’t good. They’ll frantically escape even more if you do that.”

**Brunhild:** “I see.....”

—————*Know the limits of your body.*

—————*Stop disturbing their peace for yourself, and just stay in the hall and wait patiently for him.*

As I drop my shoulders powerlessly, I think about such stuff.

I tried to renew my resolve to stop myself from stepping into the songbird’s peaceful sanctuary again, but it was in that moment that.....the person who I surprisingly love propped his knee to the ground.

With an apology to the songbirds, with much embarrassment to my own foolish moves, peeking a look at my still hung face from nearby, he said, “*First of all, remove your armor. It’s an unnecessary item when mingling in their hour of peace.*”

He said.

And then he smiled at me more gentler than anyone else in the world—————



After that I, immediately, obtained the times that I spent with them in the middle of the sunlight filtering through the trees.

I won't forget.

I won't forget.

The morning period I quietly spent while surrounded by the lovely chirpings, the time I obtained that was filled with the warmth and distress called waiting impatiently for someone, the fact that I could show a smile like an ordinary human woman, all of it.

All of it.

All of it, was because you were there for me.

—————Sigurd.

—————My one, and only hero.

—————You who have given me many things, you who I love more anyone, my beloved.